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ABSTRACT

This book is a compilation of 13 speeches given at a 1978 conference in Canberra, Australia on the theme of quality education in the Australian system. Some of the topics covered include the disadvantaged schools' program, the school as a social agency, quality education in rural schools, curriculum and the socially disadvantaged, parental involvement in the education of the disadvantaged, home background and its effect on schooling, student attitudes toward school, student achievements in the arts, and educational research. A final chapter summarizes reports of subconferences that met to discuss and make recommendations on preprimary, primary, secondary, and postsecondary education as well as lifelong learning. (LD)

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QUALITY IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

1978

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INTRODUCTION

QUALITY IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

At each annual conference of the Australian College of Education there are usually many addresses given both to plenary sessions and to concurrent sessions devoted to specific interests. The editorial committee for the annual publication has had the difficult task of selecting from the many papers offered those relevant to the theme and of interest to members of the College and to a wider audience. Because the conference held in May 1978 in Canberra on the theme, "Quality in Australian Education", was organised differently from previous conferences this volume has some differences from its predecessors. For almost three days of the conference period members met in ten sub-conferences, each of which was concerned with a different field of education. Each sub-conference was free to select its own method of investigation. Six elected to use the 'search-conference' technique in which members with common interests met in plenary session and identified those issues which needed exploration and discussion. Then, usually in smaller groups, these issues were analysed and reports prepared for consideration by the whole of the sub-conference and in most cases with some recommendations for action by the College. Edited reports from five of these sub-conferences appear in the final chapter of this volume in the hope that in their different fields they will stimulate further discussion and action.

From three sub-conferences there are no reports. The Teacher Education Sub-Conference presented a series of important recommendations for action by the Council of the College. Because of their specific nature they are not included. The Sub-Conference on Evaluation concentrated on some case-studies which were of great value to the participants who analysed them but not possible to report in a concise form. Those who shared in the study of the A.C.T. Schools Authority were most enthusiastic. However, a separate volume would be necessary to describe the Authority and its activities and its significance for Australian education. We can only hope that educators in schools and in the administration of educational systems will study and continue to study this unique organisation of education in Australia.

The Foreword to this volume by the Governor-General with its interesting biographical references, provides a thoughtful introduction to the theme of quality in education. Blackburn's notes and Start's paper provide the context in which discussion continued during the conference and in which it must continue in the future if there is to be constructive debate about education in Australia. It is clear that discussion about "quality" and "standards" cannot be profitable unless and until these terms are clearly defined. At present the participants in the public debate on education are wasting many words, time and energy because, while they are using common terms they are interpreting them differently.

Chapters 3 to 10 consist of eight addresses delivered to the Sub-Conference on Educational Disadvantage. They cover a variety of topics, some of which, such as O'Neill's and Start's papers, are not directly concerned with educational disadvantage but raise issues of concern to all teachers and administrators. However, this might also be stated about the other chapters because what has been happening under the Disadvantaged Schools Program is relevant to all schools. Ideas and programmes which have been developed, and the reports and observations on the effects of different kinds of changes provide insights into the educational process for all concerned with learning and teaching.

"Student Attitudes and Motivations Towards School: Profile on Secondary Students in South Australia and Queensland" by Anderson and Steinle is a valuable addition to the understanding of how boys and girls feel and think about schooling. Jones' paper on "The MAD Tests" provides in a new and revealing form information about boys' and girls' achievements in and reactions to those areas of education still much neglected, but essential to quality education:—music, art and drama.

The Sub-Conference on Educational Research arranged for a number of speakers to deal with different aspects of the topic. Hewitson has summarised these into one chapter together with some comments. As the introductory note states the specific recommendations to the Council of the College have been omitted.

FOREWORD

The Nineteenth Annual Conference of The Australian College of Education was opened by His Excellency Sir Zelman Cowen, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. At the opening ceremony His Excellency, who has been a Fellow for many years, was admitted to Honorary Fellowship, the highest honour the College can bestow. In his opening remarks Sir Zelman expressed his pleasure at being present and his happiness in receiving the award. The remainder of his address is printed here as a most appropriate Foreword to this volume.

I have spent my lifetime — up to December 1978 — in the service of education. It was not designed that way: I was prenatally ordained to be a barrister; my mother taught her very young son that his name was Zelman Cowen, K.C. I was to be excused for telling those who enquired my name that it was "Casey". Right up to the war, at the University of Melbourne, my intention was to qualify and go to the Bar. The war, the award of a Rhodes Scholarship in 1940 just before I went into naval service, led me to Oxford. By that time, having made that decision, I was minded to follow an academic career. It happened that I was teaching in Oxford after only one term there; I completed my degree concurrently with a heavy teaching program. I was offered a Fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1947; it seemed that it was the best of all possible worlds and I accepted. I am very happy that I did so because it gave me an opportunity to understand and to derive benefit from Oxford in a very special way. It gave me an understanding of the values and importance of undergraduate teaching which has remained with me always. I had the great experience of teaching at the University of Chicago Law School in the summer of 1949. That opened windows into the wonderful world of the great American law schools. I returned to Oxford, but when an opportunity to occupy the Chair of Public Law at my old University in Melbourne opened up in 1950, I welcomed it and we returned to Melbourne early in 1951, where, because of Sir George Paton's translation to the Vice-Chancellorship, I became Dean. There following exciting years with splendid colleagues in the building and shaping of that School. During those years I travelled frequently to the United States and taught as a visitor in some of the great American law schools. It was an enormous stimulus; the experiences of Oxford and of the United States schools were extremely valuable in shaping what we did at Melbourne; the links enabled us to send many able young graduates on scholarships, particularly to the American schools.

In 1967, I became, surprisingly, a Vice-Chancellor. I say "surprisingly" because I had never thought to do it. The Chancellor of the University of New England raised the question at a time when I was looking for something new after 16 years at Melbourne and I went there for three years. It was a very stimulating experience; I was exposed for the first time to an External Studies program, well designed and well executed. Late in 1969 came the offer to assume the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Queensland. It was very appealing: a large urban University with a wide range of professional faculties for a man whose background was professional. And so I went early in 1970 and I went, as you know, into a University not without its problems. For eight years I served the University as best I could and there were many challenges. Not the least of these was extraordinary growth and the problem of matching resource to growth so that the University could be adequately equipped and housed, and so that it could give, or claim to give, attention to the pursuit of excellence which we proudly defined as our goal. In the midst of the problems of management, not always tractable problems, there was always persistent concern with quality in education. In the circumstances, and for a complex of reasons, we often fell short. We grappled over the years with the problems which followed in the wake of the "student troubles" of University governance. The debates in this area often took on almost an "industrial democracy" face. For my own part, I believed, and believe strongly, that though there is abundant scope for participation in the work and life and governance of the University by its diverse members, there are limits. The analogy of political democracy is not appropriate and it is not appropriate for reasons stated by the Hart (Oxford University) Committee:

> "A University has as its distinctive purpose the advancement of knowledge and teaching, conceived not as the mere transmission of knowledge but as the development of powers of criticism and judgment and the adjustment of the vitalizing interplay between research and teaching. In our view, no theory of legal and political rights for the conduct of society as a whole, not even democratic theory, is transferable to the government of these distinctively academic activities. Since these are the distinctive purposes to be pursued it is, we believe, plain that teachers, equipped by skill, knowledge and experience, training and professional association with a University, should have final authority as to the manner in which they are pursued. We think that the contrary view can be held only by those who ignore the complexity of the truth and the extent to which its attainment is dependent on experience, accumulated knowledge and organization."

It seems to me that we have come through a period of great confusion and uncertainty in education. A Harvard scholar wrote of the period before the student troubles that there was still then a shared consensus within the University on what was important and what was not important, on what the standards of achievement were and how one ranked individuals in terms of those standards. Intellectual distinction and scholarly achievement were what counted and with this general consensus in values there was also a general acceptance of the system for measuring achievement of those values on the part of both students and faculty.

But there have been engulfing tides: during the sixties and particularly the latter sixties, the Canadian, Northrop Frye, said that we moved in the Universities into a period of almost continual hysteria and in the area of higher education the American educational sociologist, Martin Trow, spoke of a "complete collapse of any shared conception of what students ought to learn". The Robbins' Report in the early sixties — in the context of the English Universities — spoke of their role as being, in part, the transmission of a common culture and common standards of civilization: in the early seventies another English commission suggested that the Robbins' words expressed a doubtful philosophy when all over the world, social notions were in a state of rapid and explosive change. The values of the achievement society are deeply questioned; Richard Hoggart put it that we may be facing one of the more important changes in attitudes of the last two or three hundred years: we could be seeing the end of the Protestant work ethic in its attitude to competitive work. I see this reflected in the statement of the social setting in the Report of the Schools Commission for the 1979-1981 Triennium. It said that "the schools can no longer confidently assert a single perspective on the world or a single view of the good life. These conflicts and differences include fundamental disagreements about the priority given to technological advance and to individual material advancement as ingredients of the good life. These questions challenge the traditional justification for selection of the content of the school's curriculum and the processes and authority structures on which these operations have traditionally been based."

We face, moreover, problems which for us have not arisen in their present form for a long time past. These are the problems of severe youth unemployment and this throws up very substantial problems for those concerned with education, at all levels and particularly at the school level. These are considered in the recent reports of the Schools Commission and the Tertiary Education Commission, and Professor Karmel, the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Commission has spoken of them in recent addresses. These problems, I need hardly say, bear directly on the theme of this Conference, Quality in Education.

QUALITY IS NOT WHAT IT WAS

JEAN BLACKBURN

The following brief article consists of the notes prepared by Mrs. Blackburn for the address she gave at the Conference. They are published here because of the value of the observations and comments she made and as a contribution to the debate on quality in education.

The focus of those comments is that the compulsory years of schooling and quality is not a helpful basis for examining where we need to go in schooling.

Firstly it is intimidatory. You can't be against it, even though you don't know what you are committing yourself to in being for it.

Secondly it has orientations which are nostalgic for old certainties in a world where the tasks of compulsory education are different in significant ways from what they were.

Thirdly it assumes prior agreement about a hierarchy of goals and about means of evaluating what constitutes improved achievement of them.

Finally if it does not assume these things, it opens up the whole gamut of discussion, encouraging ideological exchange in which big terms conceal private agendas.

Quality has these difficulties because it is a relative term, concerned with degree of excellence in activities, in ways of pursuing them and in performance of them. It arises as a fashionable word at this time as a reaction against emphasis on quantitative aspects of education — resource levels and scales of provision — which have been the preoccupation of public debate in the recent past. It is, in some quarters at least, a reaction against equality talk and action which goes with it. It responds to criticism of public schools which has gained momentum as unemployment among young people has risen, expressing fears that changed emphases in the schools have resulted in falling academic standards.

It would be useful to try to unpack this responsive agenda of quality talk into specific propositions so that evidence relevant to them might be cited or collected.

I could give my personal criteria of judging quality in schools — but it would take longer than the time allotted to me and each indicator would be followed by a "provided that" qualification — indicating to me that "quality" consists in balance among desirable goals, and some compromise between conflicting ones.

Before we beat our breasts in masochistic response to voiced criticisms of the schools, there are some things we must dare to say. Among these are:

1. Sweeping generalisations about "the schools" are suspect.
2. Judgements voiced by people with no first hand knowledge of life in today's schools are suspect.
3. Any one-up recipes for improving the quality of schools are futile.

4. The whole society is implicated in what young people learn and what they value.
5. We need to attend closely to what students say about schools. Recent surveys show a high level of agreement among students about the directions in which schools most need improvement. Students do want to learn to think — but they want some closer association between what they learn to think about and the problems of personal development and the societal issues which face them.
6. In a democratic society, at least the public schools have obligations to all students. There is a need to work through more clearly what this means, not just in relation to the "detached" individual, but in relation to the allegiances and orientation of groups to which individuals have primary allegiance. Not relativism, but a demonstration that the ways of understanding which are the product of long intellectual struggle have something to give the less powerful and can serve the ends of social justice and personal liberation is important as a perspective. Knowledge is perverted when it serves only the ends of individual advancement and the justification of hierarchy.
7. The process of education is lifelong. Compulsory schooling serves the process "most" effectively to the degree that it serves the life-long struggle to become a responsible, loving, rational and mature person and recognises that both knowledge and freedom from distorting emotional hang-ups are pre-requisites for individual autonomy. So it is not "products", but people prepared to continue the struggle on both these fronts which may be the most important positive outcome of schooling. The skills and attitudes which enable people to further their own development, and provision throughout life to assist them to do so are crucial within this perspective. All people are intellectuals to the degree that they want to continue to reflect and acquire information and skills to assist this process. The desire and capacity for further development among a wide spectrum of the population is at least as equally important as the production of a professional class of "thinkers".
8. Schools do not accept an obligation to indoctrinate a conformity to the status quo, or to mindless rebellion against it. This is becoming an increasingly important thing to say — especially in relation to the great school/work confusion. Nor can schools create jobs.
9. In the search for improved quality in schools, no good purpose is served by attempts to make teachers feel guilty and incompetent. Campaigns against parents along these lines are equally destructive and have already destroyed the confidence of significant numbers of parents, without assisting them to move forward. We have collectively to have the humility — and the courage — to say that we do not know any simple, uniform ways to improve schools. We have to acknowledge that the centre for improvement is individual schools, where general aims set at societal level are translated into day-to-day operations and that teachers are the key people. Exhortations are cheap. But starting points are different and the paths

> towards general goals are different too, if we believe that the schools have to learn to adapt to what students bring to them and to seek out decisive means of making the cultural heritage living and relevant to the concerns of young people moving towards adulthood.
>
> What kinds of dialogue between teachers, parents and students are fruitful in establishing where the school is at, where it wants to go, and how to work together to get there and how movement forward can be evaluated have now become important. So has the evolution of new forms of mutual support between school and system. So has a new definition of services external to the school which both supports the idea that the wheel cannot be reinvented in every school and allows the exercise of local judgement. A common core curriculum consisting of general guidelines and allowing and servicing considerable options in content is needed, but it needs to be renegotiated as times change — and not just by professionals. There can be no objection to objective testing which reassures the community at large that at least some of the expected outcomes from schooling are being achieved, and provides schools with a useful way of checking out their expectations of performance — provided that the community is sufficiently well educated to appreciate that this is one among many forms of assessment of learning and cannot of itself provide a sensible means of evaluating schools, or students, and provided that tests do not dictate precise content or suggest that skills may be taught in some disembodied way. A combination of item banking and tests of the most highly generalisable skills, developed in cooperation with teachers, seems a useful way to go, provided that the whole operation is not seen as a "big deal".

Improved quality in schools is a complex learning process — for teachers, parents, students and the community in general. Any approach which suggests otherwise or which attempts to analyse schools according to some input-outcomes factory model is not only damaging but futile.

QUALITY IN EDUCATION

K. B. START*

"Quality" is not an objectively determined characteristic of an object or activity but a term we use to signify that the object or activity under scrutiny meets specified criterion of excellence. However there are many such criteria and these vary according to the relative value we give to competing claimants for approval: in the provision of education some of us value fair shares for all, others value individualisation of curricula to encourage all students to extend themselves to their intellectual limits, others value even more highly equality of outcomes — the latter being a process which probably involves quite deliberate uneven distribution of resources. We share many values, but rank them differently. In making judgements about the quality of education those differences in our judgements (overt or covert), about what aspects of educational achievement we value most highly, play a critical role. It is for this reason that we may say that any discussion of quality involves value judgements which reflect the individual's political, religious, more broadly, his ethical beliefs and also his sense of his own self-interest. He is probably not aware of all of these factors influencing his decisions or stirring his soul.

The stirring is like that of the Kraken, the mythical monster which is said to stir in the deeps of the ocean. Its movements cause tidal fluctuation, waves, eddies and currents on the sea's surface which the mariner, bouncing around in his coracle, tries to explain in terms of the surface forces known to him. He may well find a rationalisation which fits the surface phenomena he experiences. As a result of his analysis he might take steps to combat or to use the surface conditions. They may or may not work, to his delight or to his bewilderment. But without a knowledge however of the Kraken's existence and stirrings, his rationalising and his analyses are deceptive because, as all doctors and particularly psychiatrists know, to treat the symptoms of an illness without treating the cause is rarely more than partially successful.

Ought and Is: Theory and Reality

So where does one begin with quality education? One should define education first perhaps. Education may be the totality of life's experience. If so, then life alone is the educator and where does that leave us? If the definition is limited to formal education then schooling plays a significant part. We may see ourselves as educators garbed perhaps as parents, as administrators of educational systems or institutions or departments, as teachers or as combinations of some or all of these roles. The role of teacher/administrator within a schooling system within formal education is perhaps the situation in which we at present are most commonly found and are most familiar. But schooling is not education, no more than teaching is schooling and perhaps we would be dismayed to discover how little learning is associated with teaching, schooling or formal education.

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*The author is indebted to the criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper by Miss Wilma Hannah and Dr. D. Cave. Such contributions were invaluable and the paper is enhanced by their perception. The author lays sole claim to its errors.

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So much of education these days is "oughts" without reference to the "is's". Too often in the last 20 years in the U.S.A., the last 15 in the U.K. and the last decade in Australia, to say that education "ought" to do this, or it "ought" to produce that, was deemed to be sufficient. Because large numbers of ordinary people or small numbers of ideologically committed people believed or worked outwards from some theoretical model or simply postulated that education "ought" to achieve certain goals, schooling, it was believed, would in fact achieve those goals. For more than a decade the belief in the "oughts" has been enough.

When sceptics suggested and random evidence supported the view that these goals might not be being achieved then the "ought" position, the comfortable "it ought to" position became a bastion for rhetoric. Haldane said that the cruelest of facts can destroy the most elegant of theories, and an author's dismay at this occurrence is reflected in T. H. Huxley's comment on Herbert Spencer — "Spencer's idea of a tragedy is a deduction killed by a fact."[1] Because it would have been "nice" for us if formal education had removed social inequality, had removed economic differences, had dispensed with injustice, intolerance and all the sins man has had for millennia — man still feels that the fact that it *ought* to have done all these things transcends the reality that it has not. Education hasn't changed man, *it has just made him more of a man.* It has provided opportunities to acquire more scope for good or evil by giving him increasing numbers of and levels in specific skills. It has perhaps magnified him, his many facets, the impact of his behaviours and the dimensions of his differences.

One problem with the "ought" conviction is what to do with the conflicting evidence, often the confronting contradictory evidence. The "ought" is based on a hypothesis or a theory. A theory is, in the technical sense, a model to explain observed reality. In the world of science when the theory does not fit observed reality the theory is scrapped or gives way to a modified or a different theory which explains and predicts observed reality more adequately. The theory gives way to the facts of observed reality.

Education, or to be more correct, educators and particularly the framers of popular educational theories, have developed the habit, the *bad* habit, I would assert, of becoming more attached to the model, the theory, the ideology than to the reality it is supposed to define or reflect. Hence, when observed reality is seen not to fit the model when it *"ought"* to, when it would be "nice", "good", or "right" if it did, educators, instead of finding a better model or theory, have set about changing reality. The education machine, its powers augmented by compulsion, its captive clientele, and its ever increasing social and political overtones has such massive resources that it may be able to manipulate the offending reality into a more amenable format. Alternatively, if this proves impossible, those who direct the machine and are emotionally attached to the theories can cease collecting the harsh offending facts which assault the fine theories and content themselves with ex cathedra dogmatic if not pious statements of "oughts" as if they were statements of what "is". As Goebbels found, if you say it long enough, whilst it may not be true, people might come to believe it to be true and, something much more important, come to *act* as though it *were* true. Thus, when reality does not fit the favoured model, we may be exhorted to stop observing reality and work at moulding reality to fit it into the framework of what it "ought" to be.* When the facts do not fit the theory, either call the facts into question and attempt to produce a new set of "facts" or dispense with the facts and rely on rhetoric.

Education in Quantity

Before one can begin to talk of quality education there must be some concept of what education is. Education, in the form of learning and teaching, has been, with language, the apposite thumb, and the human brain's ability to manipulate abstract symbols one of the powerful influences which has set man above the other animals, and man above man. Once its power is recognised, the pressure for education becomes universal. Universal pressure produces a tremendous need for education in quantity. "Education for all" has become a familiar slogan in every race, culture and country over the last 50 years. "Universal primary schooling" was followed by "universal secondary education", and "universal tertiary education" is now a war-cry for many. Not only has this universality been sought for those who want it, soon it becomes compulsory for all whether they want it or not. So with expanding wealth and population comes an expanding provision for education.

Wise men, and some fools, laid down from upon high what this education should entail. Not that this really mattered overmuch as education's problem was to produce the resources for the initially voluntary demand but which quickly became a compulsory requirement. More students meant more schools, more books, more teachers. Education's industry was geared to this quantity outcome.[2] Not that questions about what books, what classrooms, what teachers did not arise but meaningfully only *after* enough books, enough classrooms, and enough teachers had been provided to meet the criteria of the day.

Starting in the more affluent countries about 20 years ago, the demand for quantity was largely being met, because of the ability of affluent societies to provide quantity in its educational system, as it had proved capable of providing quantity in other, the essentially material aspects of life — cars, houses, TVs, radios, hifi's, fridges, washing machines, etc. When the pressure for quantity does ease the latent concern for "quality" emerges. In times of shortage the "ought" philosophy can reign supreme. Since education "ought" to do this, since it is designed to do that and since we need two when we have but one, the concern appears to be "Let us get a second rather than see if the first works".

Where the outcome of a process is demonstrable, is identifiable practically, and *is* identified and measured, this "ought" argument does not hold much sway. In *education* outcomes are vaguely alluded to and rarely measured; the "ought" ideology has been dominant. In *schooling* outcomes have been believed fervently but in the main were left untested and unverified. For the many years when the actual assessment of that education outcome was not verified, it was the "quantity" or "more" criteria which remained the driving forces in educational provision.

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*Strategies include "you measure the measurable only and since important things are immeasurable you are distorting education by measuring at all", or "measurements are so loaded against the values I hold that they cannot reflect the true position".

More classrooms were built. More teachers were employed. More years in school were required of childen. More years in training were stipulated for teachers. All these on the premise that all these ought to provide a "better" education for children. But did they? No person in his right mind would argue that over the past 70 years the education of children in Australia has not improved. And in that time these "mores": more classrooms, school years, teachers, teacher training, have occurred. But as Hugh Hudson of South Australia said in the 1976 Buntine Oration at Melbourne: "Because something is good, more of it is not necessarily better".

More is Better

In 1968 in U.S.A. when I was speaking to a set of disgruntled parents of high school students who had dropped out, had taken to drugs, had joined the alternative culture or just had felt bloody-minded, I suggested that perhaps these affluent parents had left no sensible material route to success for their progeny. Brought up in a home with more bedrooms, bathrooms and cars than people, the children could see that to strive for even more bedrooms, even more toilets and cars was absurd. Yet the need remained to show that they, the children, could progress, could succeed. They couldn't succeed in the material world of their parents without becoming absurd caricatures of the affluent society, so they looked for other dimensions of behaviour in which to demonstrate their success. Hence the spiritual pursuits of meditation, the green wave, and the social conscience. If to take up these criteria required the rejection of the parents' apparently materialistic values, sobeit.

But the essential first step is the realisation that if you have one FJ Holden, having two will not get you there faster. "More", as Hudson said, "is not necessarily better". More of the same is not the answer. To be "better" means first that there are differences and secondly that certain of these differences are preferred. That preference is decided, rationally, against a value criterion held by the person(s) making the judgement. But the existence of differences, the perception of these differences, the evaluation of these differences against one or many, simple or complex criteria held by individuals or groups opens up a whole Pandora's Box.

Values Lead to Political Decisions

The current debate about education is not *educational* but political[3] in the sense that with quantity problems behind us, we are into the "quality" issue and that means both debate about *whose* values, *what* criteria and, much more critical perhaps, the machinations of groups to secure the implementation of *their* values, *their* theories of what reality *is* or *ought* to be.

Values, attitudes and ideologies are deeply held and closely associated with one's self-concept. Hence once quality judgements are introduced an individual's values are being explored and that means he is being explored.

This is threatening. Hence the issue of quality in education must be expected to generate more heat than the issue of quantity of education. The "oughts" of one's value system might find it easier to suppress any conflicting facts about or from reality or at least to prefer that such facts are not collected than to accept the need to modify the "oughts", the "ideology", the "values" and the "self-concept". So dispute about quality education challenges the innermost beliefs of individuals and the basic political, social and religious ideology of groups.

Teacher Surplus and Teacher Pupil Ratio

Teacher "Surplus"

The relation between teachers/teaching and pupil learning is a very sensitive area. Because having a teacher was seen as good, having two was better and having even more, best. It is tied into quantity thinking and rests on one of the "sacred cows" of educational administration, the pupil-teacher ratio. It has proved to be an almost meaningless statistic in terms of the learning of children.* Whilst its decrease was reinforcing of public conscience about increased educational provision it is proving to be an embarrassing statistic which no government dare throw out. As more of society's resources are fed in to reduce it to its unknown optimum, a proportion are confiscated into less face-to-face contact between pupil and teachers, more non-teaching positions in schools, more non-school positions, and increased leave arrangements. For decades teachers have sought smaller classes — usually five less than the existing average. Certainly teachers like teaching fewer children and one might think it ought to improve the learning of children. But does it? To suggest this implies that schools are there for children's learning rather than for teachers or as society's creches. There are many purposes for schools and we have to sort out their priorities.

Since there is no empirical evidence to suggest that the learning in a class of 30 is superior to that in a class of 31, or in a class of 20 as against 21 or even in a class of 15 instead of 16, reductions in class size might be seen as meeting the preference of teachers for smaller classes, for meeting the needs for educational administrators and politicians to show they are doing something, for meeting the aspirations of teacher training institutions to grow and for the reduction in work load for individual teachers. None of these appears to be related directly to children's learning and the contra pressure — costs, is equally unrelated to this over-riding criterion issue.

Given that the birth rate gives a minimum of five years' advance notice of future school populations and that the predicted decline in pupil number was apparently ignored until recently, it would appear that the aspirations of the educational administrators, the teachers and the training institutions singularly or severally, have been given considerable weight in the last decade.

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*Considerable evidence exists which suggests that between ratios of 15-40 : 1 learning of children does not appear related. It might be that given a class teaching method it doesn't matter what is the size of the class within reason.

That the growth in training capacity occurred at a time when demand was obviously reducing and the apparent lack of recognition that the effect of escalating costs must have serious implications were surprising. The demoralising effect of underemployment and of unemployment, on young trained teachers may well be the price society will have to pay for the recent indulgence in training capacity.

Equality and Diversity

The relation of quantity to equality and of quality to diversity begins to emerge in these discussions. Such analyses would be lengthy and have to be reserved for another time. Perhaps quantity approaches facilitate concepts of equality. When one talks about equality of entry opportunity to universities between the social classes perceived in society even the most egalitarian cast the admission on the basis on an equal percentage from each social stratification with perhaps the most diehard seeking positive discrimination through a higher percentage allocation for children of manual workers. Apart from the obvious criticism of such approaches as confusing occupational differences with attitudinal and cultural differences as pointed out in Britain by Stephen Haseler (p. 140)[4] and by Kemp (1977, 1978)[5] in Australia it makes the assumption that there is one education which is best for all. To assume that implies that there is one set of values. Yet the strongest advocates of this uniformity of values and education are strong proponents of the multicultural society. As long as the number game is played the anomaly in the arguments will not be apparent but once a critical, rather than a radical, analysis of quality is made the value issue becomes clearer.

Quality issues however stem from a value position. As long as there is one set of values and one set of priorities exists among those values then equality and quality can be realised easily within the same system. However once significant differences in values emerge, are fostered and are catered for then these differences create different criteria for quality in education and lay the foundation for a differentiation among the "educations" provided. A non-value system does not occur even in totalitarian societies though in such systems there is the imposition of a set of values from above. It is in the democratic world that are found the multivalue systems of the multicultural society with which we are dealing. It is the very diversity of the attitudes, values and even cultures which produce the diversity of criteria by which are established the concepts of quality, which when applied to school imply education reaching set levels on aspects deemed valuable by that group, culture or society. The establishment of these differences to meet different value systems is essential for quality education in a diverse society. Hence the process of eliminating differences under the name of equality is the antithesis of what is needed to produce quality education in a richly diverse society. In fact in a truly multicultural society, quality in education may *only* be achieved through diversity and then choice among schools.

Quantity to Quality

The types of questions applied in quantity education, how *many* of this do we have? how *many* of that do we need? These appear to be the only questions relevant. Once the pressure to provide a trained teacher for every available class is assuaged then there is a pause, a metaphoric sigh of relief and a period of looking around. When the "second wind" comes, the mind is no longer concerned with the question "Is that enough?", it begins to ask "What is being provided?" This questioning of what has been provided comes to dominate educational controversy once someone called a teacher has been provided for each demanding class unit, unless of course "need" is redefined* so that another quantity cycle is entered upon.

The second wind brings another set of questions. The first group of questions in this second set is concerned essentially with information gathering. "What are the schools doing?", "What are the teachers doing?", "What are the children doing?", "What are the children learning?". The third round of questions follows quickly and are, essentially to do with educational policy, its implementation and achievement. "What is the purpose of the school?", "What do we want schools to do for our children?", "What effect do we expect the school/teachers to have on the children?", "Are the children learning?", "How can we develop their learning?".

This second set of questions requires an information system — collection, collation, analysis and dissemination. The third round of questions raises fundamental questions as to what purposes are seen for schools.

Within educational circles these last two types of questions, information on functioning and policy have in the last decade provoked within those in education, uncertainty, bewilderment, resentment, a feeling of threat, resistance, suspicion and opposition — to quote some of the negative responses. On the positive side, the advantages of this questioning has been the reinforcement provided to teachers by the verification of the effectiveness of teaching activities, the closer relations between parents, and teachers, the greater clarity of goals, objectives and aims as well as the compilation of evidence on which to make judgements on the relative success of a specific curriculum or method in certain conditions and with particular groups of children.

The first step in moving from quantity to quality education is the provision of an information network, which is a rather grand term for a system of collecting what in terms of the criteria is seen as relevant information, of processing it, of analysing and interpreting it and of administrators, i.e. the policy-makers. Whilst such an information network would include quantity measures such as number of schools, teachers, classes, remedial classes, migrants, etc. etc., the more important argument is to obtain (or attempt to obtain) information on the difficult areas of the quality of a child's learning opportunities or experiences in school and the quality of the learning itself. As Hudson[6] points out, it is no longer any good saying it's too difficult to measure such things. The public interest of parents and their governments has moved from the quantity aspect to the quality of the education their children are receiving and to the quality of their learning.

Education departments, systems of education and even individual schools are geared to providing information of a particular type, notably *quantity*

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*For example as a lower pupil-teacher ratio.

information. Each State Minister for Education produces an annual report abounding with such quantity statistics. From the year dot you can find figures on annual cost broken down into capital, salaries, recurrent expenditure, and from there into a myriad of subcategories. It is a legitimate process, a necessary accounting to society and to the electorate. And, of course, one can note that education expenditure has climbed each successive year. On the other hand, the case books of social workers, teachers, psychologists and psychiatrists abound with examples of parents trying to buy their way out of improving the *quality* of their emotional links with and duties to their children. The acceptance by the public of the increased costs of education may well have at least one element of this, for the avoidance of facing up to the *quality* of the provision. The public has rested its case on the argument "If I pay more I must be doing better". That is a weak purchasing policy. Paying $2 for a $1 pencil does not make it twice as good.

Lack of Quality Control

The education system is geared to providing quantity information. In all fairness this is all the system could do when initially faced with the daunting task of meeting the demands of universal primary and then secondary education in an expanding community.

The education system is not geared currently to providing systematic information on the quality either of the educational process or, and far more crucially, the quality of the learning of the children who are required to undergo that schooling. It is ironic that in fact we sentence five-year-old children to a twelve year stretch, with up to three years' remission for unsuccessful behaviour. We do this without monitoring the quality of the experience we force on them or assessing the quality of the learning which accrues.

Education has no systematic information on the *quality* of learning which can be relayed equally systematically back to teachers, parents and society. Despite this, schools claim to teach a plethora of skills and to encourage the child to develop in a number of areas. All this without feedback to anyone whether these goals have been achieved. A number of examples are suggested.

Most schools claim to teach in ways which will enhance the *social* development of children. Certainly one can find, though with some difficulty, those schools or teachers offering formal or informal courses in this area but where can one find data on how successful these courses have been? Nowhere in Ministers' reports can you find statistics on the levels of the social development of children to parallel the quantity data on number of children who are six or seven or are sixteen and seventeen in the system. Is not the maturity of children's social development worth noting as much as their chronological maturity?

Schools have the responsibility to enhance the physical development of children and one can get the quantity figures of schools with gymnasia, schools with P.E. specialists, and schools with P.E. programs (which is, in theory at least, all schools), so one can presume that all children are exposed to some physical education during school. But where in the Ministers' reports can you find information on the *quality of that exposure* or the *quality of the physical skills* of the children? We may read that in a particular year there were 30 P.E. specialists per 1000 children in secondary schools and ten years later there were 60. But have the physical skills of children improved? Has their physical development been enhanced? Where is the evidence? Certainly not in the quantity reports to which the educational system is geared.

The development of the intellectual skills of children has long been one of unchallenged purposes of schools. The vast majority of children go to primary school at five years of age, unable to read, and the vast majority of these leave at age eleven, able to do so. This fact is so well known it is all too easy to lose sight of. Certainly it is never mentioned in reports of Directors of Primary Education. More to the point, the quality of that reading certainly is *never* referred to. We know that there are X thousand eight-year-old children but we do not know how many children have the reading ability of the average eight-year-old when they are in fact seven or six years old, or perhaps more critically when they are nine or ten years old. Even without using such population normative data, we do not know from routine ministerial reporting how many or what proportion of children can or cannot perform a criterion referenced reading task. Why do we allow ourselves to remain so ignorant of these quality issues? Why is it more important to know how many children are in school than whether they are learning anything?

In the reports of the Directors of Secondary Education one can see the number of children who leave school as soon as possible and those who stay on one or two or three years beyond this minimum time. Should students, by the time they leave the secondary schools, have developed positive attitudes to themselves, to society, to work and to study? Where will you find the defined criteria for recognising these positive attitudes? Where does one read of the proportion of children who have not had the quality of learning experience or of learning itself sufficient to reach the minimum level of these attitudes? Where can one discover the proportion of those who have achieved minimum, desired and outstanding levels in the quality of this development? Surely the position is untenable that since everyone has "attitudes" it matters little how good or how bad they are? That would be as if, since everyone has "money" it does not matter whether it is $1, $10s, $100s or $1000s.

To summarise, we have no system for collecting data on the quality of the learning of children and have no reporting to society in this area. Why have we fought shy of finding out how well children learn? Why are we petrified at the suggestion of reporting the quality of their learning? Why?

Stand or Deliver?

Irrespective of the answers we might give to these questions, the fact remains that there is no system for reporting to the community on the quality of education and in the face of requests for such information those in charge of education systems find themselves at a loss. They could set about getting such information, but that is a major task. In the interim, between the response and the questions, those in education are bewildered, uncertain and feel somewhat insecure. The natural response to such insecurity is defensiveness and this generates stalling. If the pressure for information does not abate either the defensiveness grows, or an information system is developed. If much time and energy are spent in defending existing practices and stalling enquiries, and little on developing an information system on quality, then confrontation between the questioners (the public) and the responders (the teachers) can result. In these circumstances declamation tends to take the place of evidence. The ego involvement in the confrontation can lead to self-concept threat which can produce hurt and aggressive reactions.

Evidence of all these responses, e.g. wariness and defensiveness among teachers and insistence among parents and the public has been seen at very minor levels in pockets in Australia in the last three years, reflecting similar occurrences in the U.K. in the early 1970s and in the U.S.A. through the 1960s. Thankfully there is other evidence which suggests that again in a minor key and located in pockets throughout Australia there has been a professional response from teachers, principals and educational administrators for the provision of information. Teachers, principals, administrators and members of School Councils are sitting down trying to thrash out the issues of the purpose of school, its goals and the means of assessing the achievement of these goals.

It is worthy of note, if somewhat ironic, that after a decade in the U.S.A. where teachers stood back and watched the establishment of such assessment/information systems, they have now joined in to make sure that, since the need for an information system is there to stay, it will be educationally relevant and useful to the schools.

Perhaps Australian education might bypass that decade in the "wilderness" and through the leadership of its teachers, a relevant and useful system of assessing the quality of the educational process might be set up with their guidance from the outset.

Purposes of School

With quantity issues resolved, the quality issue emerges and the first crucial question rapidly becomes that of "What are the schools there for?". It becomes necessary to define what society, or groups in society see as roles and non-roles for the school. Having done that, among even the many desirable roles, a priority has to be established as all goals might not be equally important and if time, money or other allocations have to follow then some consensus on the priorities is desirable.

Most legislation concerning schools refers to such issues as the intellectual, moral, personal, physical and social development of children. Such statements are so broad as to belong to the "God, Motherhood and the Flag" category — so all-embracing as to be effectively meaningless. One has to delve much deeper and into much more detail before purposes can be framed in a manner which enables verification of their achievement to be possible.

In the process of developing goals to the precision which permits verification, one finds that the quantity approach to education masks a wide diversity of conflicting and even mutually exclusive purposes, goals, objectives, aims . . . call them what you will. It even finds the tension between overt (stated) goals and covert (hidden) aims. These differences in stated or unstated goals exist between individuals, between groups and between societies. Fundamental differences in the role of schools/education are perceived between politically opposed groups, between religiously differentiated groups, between groups with fundamentally different views on child rearing, on the structure of society, and between the "haves" and the "havenots". In fact the essence of group membership is agreement on views and priorities within the group and a dissonance between these views/priorities and other views/priorities held by persons outside the group.

Once one explores the purposes of schools as perceived by groups then the anaesthetic provided by sole concern for quantity education soon wears off. For example, shock to individuals and collision between groups can follow the mere public expression of views such as, the purpose of school is to redistribute the wealth of society, to redistribute power in society, to maintain the current elitist class structure of society, to produce factory fodder, to develop a multiracial society, to develop a more tolerant society, to make a more just society, to fit a child for society, to prepare a child to enter further education, or employment, or adult life, to ensure equality of outcomes, to redress society's imbalances — all on the macrolevel.

At the microlevel there are views which suggest schools should concentrate on the 3Rs, others which imply that schools must do everything that society cedes to them from driver *education*, safety *education*, drug *education*, parent *education*, sexuality *education*, religious *education*, to maths *education*, to social *education*, to political *education*. In fact, slipping the word "education" after any noun has become a habit for too many people who see problems in society.

Schools have become the dumping ground for all the tasks which one by one have been shed as onerous by other of society's agents — for example, the parents, the churches, the local community — but mainly the parents. We are in danger of an increasing proportion of society believing that more and more learning tasks necessitate schooling, formal teaching, formal courses and formal certification at the end. However the award of a certificate, the attendance at a formal course, the presence of a teacher, the structure of a school does not guarantee any particular quality of learning and *"seat-time"* as the Americans have found out can be a very misleading estimate of what a student has learned even after 12 years of schooling. Many of the individual States of the U.S.A. have put in a minimum literacy requirement, a quality requirement, before a high school diploma may be awarded. I understand that even the City University of New York, which until recently has been held up as the epitome of an open admissions institution, has through experience of high failure rates and the associated problems, found it necessary to require evidence of a minimum literacy level of Grade 8 or 9 among those high school graduates (i.e. completed Grade 12) who apply for admission. Used alone, quantity criteria had proved damaging to the tertiary students, the staff and the institution.

Clarity of Definition

A community might have many functions for its schools, one of which may be an educational role. Most societies would include education as one necessary function among the school's overall functions but its place among these others or its significance in relation to them might well vary. (As examples of school functions there would be custodial role, indoctrination, welfare.) The priorities among these roles would be based on a value system and would have short or long term implications as both advantages and disadvantages, for vocational and social outcomes.

The first step in the pursuit of quality of education is to decide, describe and carefully define in terms which allow their achievement to be verified, the purposes, goals, aims and objectives of schools.

It is unlikely that consensus will be reached on this. Groups whose major purpose for schools is essentially political, *the restructuring of society along ways they, the adults, have defined* are unlikely to share the requirements of a group aiming *to preserve the current society and to leave any modification to the next generation and their values.* The group espousing the sanctity of individual differences is unlikely to be happy with the ideology of equality of outcomes professed by another group.

Consensus is unlikely. More realistically one should expect in a coherent society that there are many criteria. Some things will be agreed upon by all members of society. Others may be held in common, but given different priorities by different elements in society. Finally there would be other criteria held only by some members of the society.

Concepts of quality based on universally agreed criteria would be straightforward. Discussion might then venture on how quality may be fostered and assessed. However the criteria which are commonly shared but whose importance is ranked differentially by society's subgroups and the criteria which are held uniquely by single subgroups become subjects of debate. There may follow the need for diverse approaches, possibly diverse educations and even the acceptance of diverse outcomes perhaps.

Hence quality may come only through diversity. Once quantity issues are satisfied each group may develop a quality education based on the values and attitudes they hold and which govern the purposes they ascribe to school. There would be quality "educations" defined, sought and supported by the value judgements of different factions of society.

Such a development obviously has strong political implications. The multiracial society, the multicultural society, though an evocative rallying call none may deny these days, may well be a mirage if the racial or the social groups are based on significantly different value and attitude systems. Within-group cohesion is likely to far outweigh any between-group adhesion;

yet that more comprehensive cohesion is necessary for the groups to coalesce as a "society". Far from acting as an adhesive, fundamentally different value structures could be divisive.

A community will not collapse if people do not share *all* the attitudes of the society. One might perhaps distinguish between those values or attitudes which are central to the society and those peripheral on which diverse views could exist without threat to the existence of the society. The priorities among those commonly held values would also be of significance especially when the values or the society, is under stress albeit one of economic stringency.

The concept of a society or community of people who do not share the same attitudes and values or even have a consensus on such matters might well be antithetic/antilogistic.* Groups, societies and cultures are formed *not* because their members differ but because the members share one or more significant traits.

Stephen Haseler,† when talking about types of political leadership, made a number of points (p. 73) about a society without consensus but with conflicting factions. He refers to the politician "manager" as compared with the committed statesman. He alludes to the effect of lack of consensus in the society and the emergence of powerful rival factions. In such circumstances the society turns to the "manager" rather than the statesman for appeasement.

> "In stable societies with an ideological consensus . . . the manager who can keep the stable and affluent show on the road will be a sufficient leader . . .
>
> ". . . As the consensus within society breaks down, in the initial phase of breakdown, people will turn to the mollifier, the conciliator, the manager to get them out of trouble . . .
>
> "Where the ideological consensus is breaking down under the remorseless onslaught of economic decline, class, religious and even national divisions, the manager will hardly be able to cope." (p. 73.)

Haseler also comments on the difference between multiculturalism with and without consensus.

> "Beyond formal politics we can see the emergence of a greater pluralism . . . and many (groups) have little regard for the central control of law and Parliament. This is the ugly apotheosis of pluralism . . .
>
> "Managers are already misreading the nature of the new pluralism — which is not the stable self-regulating pluralism of the U.S. but rather an increasingly ungovernable and dangerous plurality of starkly conflicting ideologies; interests, when they do not impose order upon it, but rather appease it by modish methods of conciliation . . . It is scarcely possible to reconcile those Marxist controlled unions in

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*A nonsense such as a black white man, a 6-foot tall midget, a watertight sieve.

†Haseler, Stephen (1976): *The Death of British Democracy*. London: Paul Elek.

> Britain to what they consider to be the bourgeois state — they want to destroy it." (p. 73.)

The view that compromise is always possible, or an answer or even *the* answer is challenged both by Haseler and by Townsend.[7] They see that when consensus of value systems breaks down to the extent of being mutually exclusive then conciliation/appeasement may be less effective than victory/defeat for one set of values which becomes dominant.

> "Such ideological and religious divergences, so long as the economy cannot buy time, can be resolved only by the victory, at much cost of one side over the other." (Haseler, p. 73) and "Compromise is usually bad . . . listen to both sides and then, unlike Solomon, pick one or the other. This places solid accountability on the winner to make it work." (Townsend, p. 32.)

A society therefore needs a set of common values and a set of agreed priorities among these common values as well as a tolerance of other specific, local, subgroup values and priorities. Communality of values and priorities provides the cohesion by which a society can be recognised and is its stabilising cement. Obsession with different values and priorities may undermine that cohesion and stability. Containing the stresses will absorb society's entropy. Either one set of values will be imposed or the society will fracture and reform into different societies each with at least an agreed minimum consensus of values and priorities. So perhaps it is so within education. Without an agreed consensus on commonly shared educational values and priorities sufficient communality of what is to be quality education will not be possible. We will then be unable to talk of the equal quality of education for all Australian children, the children of one State, one geographical district, or across all social, ethnic and cultural groups.

Overt and Covert Value Criteria

Criteria for judgements based on values, and even the values themselves can operate at overt and covert levels. For an overt or public criteria the problem may be mainly one of refining the precision of the definition of those criteria towards verifiable outcomes.

Covert criteria can function at two levels. The first is where they are known to individuals or groups but are not for public consumption. The second level is where they are unknown even to the individuals concerned. In either of these two cases, decisions may be taken seemingly on one (public or overt) criteria whereas the dominating influence is the covert criteria. The world of politics is riddled with such procedures. The increasing politicisation of education is probably nurturing that presentation and makes educational decision-making that much more time consuming. Now one must endeavour to deduce the covert motives of pressure groups in education be they parent, teacher or employer; political, social, ethnic or religious; independence, environmental, homo, hetero or bi.*

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*For example, many of us at a parents' night at a school have heard the question to the speaker on teaching foreign languages in primary school and realized that it is a covert request from an ethnic or migrant group for a place for its language in the regular curriculum.

Since concepts of quality are tied to value systems, the different values of discrete groups in society would underwrite different "educations" or aspects of education as being of value, therefore as being desirable, and to be sought and worked for.

No one should be so naive as to think that such pressures on education are recent. The pressures have always been there as any educational historian can demonstrate. *What may be different is that with quantity demands met and quality issues now beginning to dominate the current critical analysis of education, the overt and covert value systems of society and its subgroups take on much greater significance than before.*

Quality Education

Quality education therefore may only be achieved when the "power-brokers" decide, or the principal "stakeholders" in that education agree, on the essential purposes of their schools which then set out to achieve those goals to levels as defined . . . by the "stakeholders" in democracies, by the "power elites" in totalitarian systems.

The purposes, the priorities and the achievement levels are all value judgements as to what comprises quality education in the view of the decision-makers. They may be influenced by the views of others and by evidence, but the ultimate decision on what school is to be all about is the culmination of a series of value decisions about the relative worth of those achievements, the attainment of which is held to be assisted by the formal or informal education provided by the school.

Hence it would always be valid to assess the quality of the education offered by school A by measuring how well the school has achieved the goals set by its stakeholders.

It might be valid in another (comparative) concept to see how well school A achieved the goals set by stakeholders B for their school. But school A could not be held responsible for the success or lack of success in achieving goals B, as it never set out to do so. School A might well achieve the goals set by Group B and therefore would be providing a quality education as perceived by that group, but insofar as goals A and goals B are different (not dissonant, just different) the achievement of goals B would be fortuitous.

Of course it is likely that some goals would be accepted by all schools, if not by choice then required by the community at large. For example, one might argue that the tools of learning, literacy and numeracy and the development of positive attitudes to learning are crucial for all children and may not be left to the individual decision of each and every school. Similarly one might argue at a deeper level that the very concept of being "education" implies some communality of goals, experiences, perhaps outcomes. Accepting this, some cross referencing would seem necessary.

Quality education therefore, since it is value based, will evolve from a diversity of schooling to meet the specific expectations of different groups in society.

Some of the expectations of certain groups for their schools may have better "payoffs" than the expectations of other groups for outcomes, e.g. university/college entrance. This difference would have to be accepted if the right of communities to set their educational parameters is accepted and the resultant diversity is accepted. It might transpire that one kind of goal or one kind of achievement is set as an important goal for its school by one community, even though it is not, or should not be, in the opinion of the stakeholders in another school, an appropriate goal for *their* school. Different goals, with the resultant different achievements, could well have distinctly different outcomes in terms of society's opportunities.

Such a local goal setting might perpetuate the existing social structure however. Those with the knowledge of long range effects will plan an educational system to include these.* Those without such knowledge (or conviction) might well set different goals for their schools. They could find that while their schools do what they ask of them, the resultant education may only be of short term benefit to their children. The effect of limited goals and achievements may well limit their children in the long term.

The fact that there may be a multiplicity of values, and their resulting "educations" does not argue that they are all equal or that debate among them is not possible. It may well be demonstrable that some values/educational goals, etc. are "better" than others in preparing members of society for different facets of life. It still remains to decide how important each facet is.

It is easy to see that given a diversity of (different) quality education, the advantages of one might be maximised in certain circumstances while, a change in circumstances could well highlight as advantageous the outcomes developed by another "education". Given the diversity of society's needs and of the possible circumstances faced by any individual, a particular "education" might prepare its progeny to meet certain of society's needs (and therefore "advantage" them for the appropriate "opportunities"), whilst its lack of preparation would "disadvantage" them for certain other opportunities. It is unlikely that any one "education" can equally prepare its progeny for all of the many different needs of a complex society except at the most trivial level of achievement. For a single "comprehensive" education to attempt to prepare children for the many faceted needs of a sophisticated society it might have to concentrate on achievement minima of quite dubious utility to achieve equality of preparation. As an example, Fig. 1 shows how three simple, quality educations might function within a simple (6 faceted) society.

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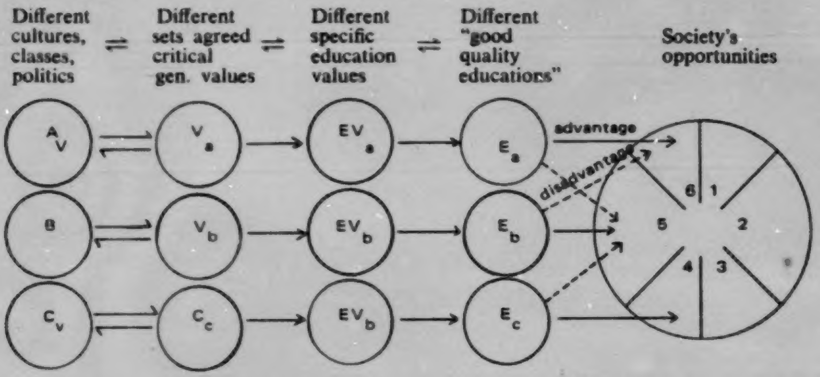
*The value of this forward planning may well depend on the stability of the future. Instability will wreck such planning—e.g. the questionable value of saving in a hyper-inflationary situation.

FIGURE 1

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THREE SIMPLE QUALITY EDUCATIONS WITHIN A MULTIFACETED SOCIETY


Different cultures, classes, politics
Different sets agreed critical gen. values
Different specific education values
Different "good quality educations"
Society's opportunities
A V
V a
EV a
E a
advantage
disadvantage
B
V b
EV b
E b
C v
C c
EV b
E c
1
2
3
4
5
6

For opportunity 5 those going through Education E_b will be advantaged, whilst those going through educations E_a and E_c will be disadvantaged. Similarly, advantages arising from congruence of criteria can be seen in opportunity 4 and in 6.

Equality and quantity may be congruent just as quality and diversity might be sequitors.

It is logically possible to provide a number of educations which exhibit quality within themselves but the quality of one would not be affirmed by the criteria of another. For example, from an existing selection of "educations" it is easy to see how an excellent quality "education" in a high school may, through the eyes of technical education and using its criteria, be perceived as being of a lower quality than the assessment of it given by high school teachers and parents on their criteria. A high quality science course at HSC level may rightly be considered a low quality humanities or secretarial course and the imposition of HSC exams in History, Latin, English Literature or of typing-shorthand tests would verify that view. A high quality education from a Marxist or Maoist viewpoint might produce atheistic state orientated revolutionaries and this could well be anathema to religious, private enterprise orientated, rightwingers committed to the maintenance of the capitalist society. One can see that one education was not designed to meet the requirements of another and must, justifiably claim that it should not be accountable on criteria other than those it was designed to satisfy.

Whereas quantity education is more concerned with putting a person (the teacher) in front of a group of children (the class), quality education may have the premise that sufficient persons are available and then progresses to analyse what teachers do and what their students learn. Ironically with the onset of quality analysis, inferences may well be drawn that little is learned, or little learned well or little of value learned well enough. In such a case the efficacy of the education and its schools would be questioned and even the relevance of the quantity aspect of education challenged. Certainly if outcomes were clearly seen to be the antithesis of the aims then the quantity of that education currently being offered would be challenged as certainly no education of that counterproductive sort would be preferable to *any*. The whole basis for quantity education might be challenged by a quality analysis which showed that better quality learning outcomes might result from fewer or less resources but of the *right* resources than is provided by the simple quantity approach of providing more and more because if some is good more must be better.

In Summary

This is really a mapping exercise and should be taken as such. Early maps are usually found to be full of errors but they may provide subsequent cartographers with a baseline which may be criticised and improved.* Sobeit with this attempt.

The position taken has been that we have ended the period where quantity issues dominated education. The number of schools, the number of pupils, the number of teachers, the number of books, even the number of innovations have ceased to pre-empt all other discussions. Issues about the quality of the education are now taking precedence. Questions are being asked about what is being learned and how well it is being learned.

These questions are not new. They have always been asked. It is just that until recently they have been in the chorus line while quantity issues were in the footlights and had the leading roles. With a more well educated society faced with dramatically escalating educational costs at a time of worldwide economic stringency, questions of quality have become significant and the quantitative nature of the required answers have been much more defined by society, the parents, the taxpayers and their elected representatives.

Educational systems, while having mechanisms for collecting and reporting quantitative educational facts have no information system on the quality of their systems.

We can say how many schools there are, but not how many of them are achieving their aims. We can say how many children, but not how many are learning well or badly. We can say how many teachers, but little about their effectiveness. Without an information system capable of providing information on the quality in education, questions requiring replies on quality issues may be first bemusing, secondly threatening, to those in the educational system.

To get at quality data, quality has to be defined and a process for measuring this devised. Quality is the end product of a series of events beginning with the elucidation of the purposes of the school, the curriculum to achieve them, the assessments to verify the level of achievement, the evaluation to place assessments against purpose criteria and the reporting system to the society at its different levels.

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*One of the colleagues who read this paper in draft form commented that the makers of such maps "are culpable however if information to correct them is available". Advice was taken, not always followed to the letter, and thus I am culpable of the errors which remain.

The requirement of the statement of goals in verifiable forms exposes the different value systems of groups within society. These value systems may differ marginally or even seriously. The differences might even reach levels of mutual exclusivity. Such a requirement might also highlight the differences between the covert and the overt goals of individuals, groups or cultures in a society. Resolution of these differences is never easy as values are not objectively verifiable as right or wrong. Hence different quality "educations" can be envisaged as reaching the different criteria of different groups, and of some groups but not others. It raises the question of educational goals which are accepted by all groups in a coherent society, those shared but among which priorities might differ and those criteria which are group specific. The inter-relation of these questions may be the delicate balance between a society's tolerance and its potential for rupture, for evolution or revolution.

Once one becomes involved with value systems one finds that these are not single threads but a network of beliefs, attitudes and ideologies. One pulls on a simple thread and this quickly leads to other interwoven strands which can lead to the fisherman being enmeshed in the net he pulls in. One issue on education leads quickly to others, to matters of politics, religious belief, the worth of individuals and finally to one's own worth. Educational threads are dangerously complex to haul in.

In the last five or ten years in Australia and even longer in U.K. and U.S.A., the emerging issues of quality have led to somewhat of a polarisation in the educational world. At its simplest this refers to the pre-eminence of social or of intellectual goals; of local rather than common objectives and of non-measurement versus measurement. To describe the polarisation with some justifiable complexity and accuracy would take hours and even then consensus would not be achieved.

Too often discussion degenerates into polarities, each cast as caricatures by the other. Protagonists of each viewpoint tend to ascribe to their opponents, extreme positions in all facets of belief. To be for quality is in the eyes of some to be suspected of elitism, of right wing political tendencies, of measurement obsession, of being in favour of traditional teaching methods, of devaluing affective, social and personal development in favour of cognitive skills, of favouring the power base of middle class knowledge and of denigrating the values of "the working class" and of the multi-cultural society. Those advocating the neo-quality argument ascribe to their ideological adversaries an equally extreme but opposite set of roles and values. One wonders why there is such paranoia among the lunatic fringes of right and left in education.

These are of course the extreme positions and held by small if vocal and influential minorities. There is a very large middle ground containing the vast majority of educators albeit much less vocal and active — yet again an example of the silent majority. You may draw upon your own experience to recall this more rational debate. Your personal experiences may show marked differences with the extremes alluded to above, but how many diluted similarities do you recognise?

Quality education challenges the basic view of what a society's schools are for. As quality has become more of a concern than quantity and as education becomes more politicised, both of these pressures may well cause us to ask, what society do we want for the future?

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THE DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS PROGRAM: A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

SHIRLEY K. RANDELL

The purpose of this paper is to describe the Schools Commission's Disadvantaged Schools Program as an important strategy in the promotion of quality in Australian education. After a brief consideration of the historical background to the establishment of the Disadvantaged Schools Program the objectives and operation of the program will be discussed. Strategies recommended for improving education for disadvantaged children will be described. Finally some of the constraints and tensions governing progress in the program will be discussed in relation to what may be possible in the future. The paper is intended as background for the theoretical issues addressed by later papers in the sub-conference.

Historical Background

Establishment and Functions of the Schools Commission

The Schools Commission was established in 1973 along the lines recommended by the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission which was set up by the Commonwealth Government to examine needs of government and non-government primary and secondary schools throughout Australia.[1] The functions outlined in the *Schools Commission Act 1973* include consideration of the need to improve the quality of existing school provision and the promotion of increased and equal educational opportunities, taking into account, among other things, needs of disadvantaged schools and of those students in all schools who are disadvantaged in their pursuit of educational success for reasons to do with their social, economic, ethnic, geographic, cultural or lingual background.

Program Structure

The Commission established a number of Programs to administer the funds which were recommended to the Government as expenditure necessary for Australian schools to reach acceptable standards. The Programs reflect the priorities the Commission considers should be given to the needs of schools for buildings, equipment and staff.

The Disadvantaged Schools Program, which is directed at improving the quality of education for disadvantaged children and is one of the four specific purpose Programs of the Commission, is the focus of this paper. However, disadvantaged groups and groups with special needs are also catered for through other Commission Programs: for example, handicapped children and children in institutions through the Special Education Program, and groups such as girls, Aborigines and early school leavers through the Special Projects Program. In addition, the Commission's general purpose Programs include funds for the disadvantaged: a component for migrant and multicultural education in the General Recurrent Grants Program and building grants for disadvantaged schools in the Capital Grants Program.

Commission Values

The values espoused by the Commission in all of its Reports have particular relevance to the Disadvantaged Schools Program.[2] In emphasising equality of educational opportunity and outcomes the Commission maintains that ideally life chances, which are strongly associated with the special competencies which schooling is designed to build, should be independent of social and cultural background and that all young people should leave school able to make sense of their world and to act confidently in it. The Commission believes that the quality of schools and their educational programs will be improved by increased parental and community participation and the devolution of responsibility and decision-making towards the school level. Openness to a range of possibilities and functions of schools beyond existing arrangements is a further value espoused by the Commission. If they are to be effective, school programs must adapt to the social, cultural and ethnic differences of children within them.

The Disadvantaged Schools Program

The Disadvantaged Schools Program exists to provide more equal educational opportunity for children who in the past have been unable to benefit as much as the majority of students from the schooling process. There are two important aspects of this provision. One is the distribution of extra resources to schools whose selection is based on the socio-economic status of their neighbourhoods. The other is the application of those extra resources through the engagement of people in a particular process which involves the total school community in making decisions on what projects they consider to be most effective in improving education in the particular circumstances of each school.

Extra Resource Provision

There are several grounds for providing extra resources for disadvantaged schools.[3] First, schools generally have poorer resources available within them. A majority of disadvantaged schools are in inner-city neighbourhoods or isolated country communities. The school buildings themselves are often older and the playing areas that are provided are often inadequate. Past practice in some State systems, where significant subsidies for equipment and amenities were tied to locally raised funds, penalised poor communities. Further, schools which are disadvantaged tend to be unattractive to teachers. They recognise that it is a difficult assignment to be appointed to one of these schools and tend to live in areas and apply for positions in schools which are in neighbourhoods more attractive to them.

A second ground for extra resource provision is the environmental disadvantage experienced by many of these schools. The private and public resources of the communities are generally low; housing areas tend to be segregated and crowded; there is little extra money for families to pay for books for children or for excursions or travel beyond the community. In general, community facilities are less generously provided. Low income families tend to be those which are most at risk in relation to unemployment and often families in disadvantaged communities contain a very high percentage of people using social services of one kind or another. In these circumstances, peer, parental and teacher expectations are often limited and these lowered expectations dampen the individual learning ambitions of students. Efforts are being made to understand the ways in which schools contribute to the gap between aspirations and expectations in these communities.

The third ground for the provision of extra resources and the most important, is that there is a tradition of low educational achievement in these schools. Retention rates for senior students in disadvantaged schools are lower than the average across Australia and learning failure is more frequent. Examples of low retention rates in three significant groups are detailed in Table 1, and Figures 1 and 2. Beyond the school level the education system reinforces inequality by devoting its resources overwhelmingly to successful students while neglecting those with the greatest need.

TABLE 1

RETENTION AND RACE

Persons attending Years 11 and 12 expressed as a percentage of secondary students for ABSEG-holders* and Australia, 1976.†

	ABSEG Holders		*Australia*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Attending Years 11 and 12	445	508	109,610	107,085
Attending Secondary	6,848	6,986	571,764	546,385
Percentage	6.5	7.3	19.2	19.6

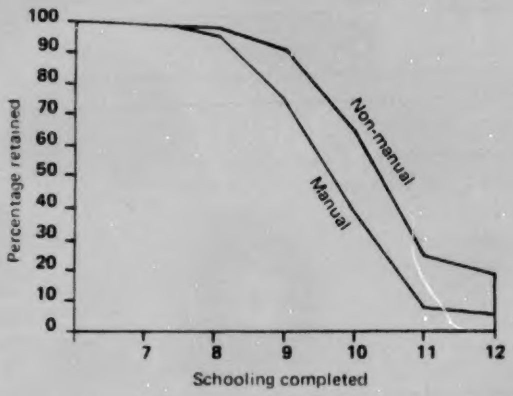
Source: Commonwealth Department of Education.

*All Aboriginal students hold Aboriginal Secondary Education Grants (ABSEG).

†In 1977, 28 per cent of 16-year-old Aborigines were at school — compared with 58 per cent of 16-year-old non-Aborigines.

FIGURE 1

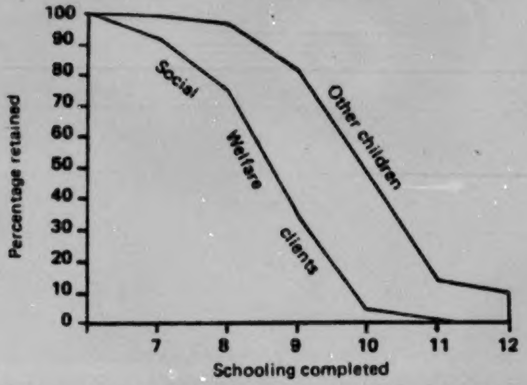
RETENTION AND FATHER'S OCCUPATION



Children of fathers in non-manual and manual occupations.

FIGURE 2

RETENTION AND SOCIAL WELFARE CLIENTS



Source: Tasmania: follow-up study of children in Grade 3 from 1959 onwards. (Behrens, N., "Schooling and Work" (Poverty and Education Series). Canberra, AGPS, 1978, p. 15.)

As long as the total resources available in the upbringing of children are unequal as a result of social circumstances, including unequal income and unequal distribution of public resources among neighbourhoods, then there are strong arguments for positive discrimination in resource allocation. In a society where levels of education are rising and formal education increasingly determines life chances, the consequences for children failing to reach certain minimal levels of competence become even more serious than they have been in the past. It is a matter of social justice that such children should receive the maximum assistance from educational programs and that schools should be given support to adapt their structure, curricula and educational practice to extending opportunities and widening the horizons of the children they serve.

The Importance of the Process

The process established to use the additional resources provided is a very important part of the Disadvantaged Schools Program. School communities are required to analyse the existing school arrangements and the special needs and life experiences of their students. Teachers, together with parents and senior students, then plan school improvements in relation to the objectives of the program (see below). They develop proposals which they consider will improve educational practice in the school and improve learning outcomes for the students. These proposals are then put to representative committees which allocate funds to provide the resources in either human or material ways. Part of the process that is expected of school communities is that they constantly evaluate the projects they have put into practice.

Objectives of the Program

The Program aims to improve the learning process in schools so that it becomes more effective. This is done by making the curriculum more meaningful and ensuring a closer interaction between families and schools. By engaging parents as partners in the learning process teachers develop a greater knowledge and appreciation of what children bring to the school by way of experience, skills and knowledge. Parents grow in understanding and self-esteem as they become more actively involved in significant school decisions and realise they have a necessary and worthwhile contribution to make to the education of their children.

The Program is not a compensatory program in the sense of being directed to alleged cultural or language deficits in the homes from which children come: the main emphasis is on what schools can do, not on perceptions of what homes do not do. Nor is the Program a charity exercise. It is an attempt to redress the imbalance of educational and social provisions as they have affected relatively poor neighbourhoods in the past.

Disadvantaged Country Areas

In 1977 a new element for disadvantaged country areas was introduced into the Program in recognition of the particular educational disadvantages experienced by country students (see Table 2). The objective of the program for disadvantaged country areas is to improve the quality of educational provision for country children by investigating new patterns of services at reasonable cost. All government and non-government primary and secondary schools in the seventeen declared areas across Australia share in the facilities and resources made available. Decision-making is shared by system authorities, State and Area Committees, teachers, students, parents and the community. Again the emphasis is on engaging people in identifying their own problems and in developing quality educational programs for their students. Detailed discussion of disadvantaged country areas is beyond the scope of this paper, which concentrates on disadvantaged schools, but, a report on the implementation of the program for disadvantaged country areas is available[4] and later in the sub-conference Dr. Don Edgar referred to the Victorian program in his paper "Quality Education in Rural Schools" which appears later in this volume.

TABLE 2

RETENTION AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Students attending level 10 expressed as a percentage of all students in the same type of school and geographic location, Australia, 1971.

Geographic Location	*Government*			*Catholic Non-Government*			*Other Non-Government*			*All Schools*		
	Males	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*
Major urban	4.7	3.9	4.3	5.9	4.9	5.4	17.9	16.0	17.0	5.6	4.7	5.2
Other urban	3.8	3.5	3.6	4.0	3.4	3.7	16.3	15.3	15.8	4.1	3.7	3.9
Rural	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.0	10.4	11.1	10.7	3.0	3.2	3.1
All locations	4.2	3.6	3.9	5.1	4.4	4.8	17.2	15.6	16.4	4.9	4.3	4.6

Source: From tabulations provided to the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Census 1971. (Fitzgerald, R., "Poverty and Education in Australia": Fifth main report of the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty. Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p. 21.)

The Operation of the Disadvantaged Schools Program

Statistics

Approximately 13 per cent of all Australian school children are participating in the Disadvantaged Schools Program (400,000 students in 1,200 schools — see Figure 3). Eighty-seven per cent of the students are in government schools, 74 per cent of them are in primary schools and 78 per cent of them are in major urban areas. In 1978 the allocation for the Program is $20.5m and the designated capital component within the Capital Grants Program provides a further $10.7m. The cost of this recurrent provision amounts to $51.5 per student in declared disadvantaged schools representing less than 1 per cent of total Australian educational expenditure on schools. The allocation to the Program represents 3.2 per cent (4.9 per cent if the capital component is included) of the overall Commonwealth Government expenditure on schools. In terms of national average per student expenditure in primary schools, the Program provides approximately 5 per cent additional resources per student enrolled in a disadvantaged school.

For their initial listing of disadvantaged schools, all systems relied heavily on an index provided by the Interim Committee of the Schools Commission.[5] This index has been demonstrated to be effective in identifying groups of schools in which various sources of educational disadvantage operate.[6] All government systems and some of the Catholic systems have conducted large-scale surveys of schools between 1975 and 1978 in attempts to achieve a more accurate yardstick for the measurement of disadvantage. The criteria being used in State surveys focus on two broad areas: indicators of poverty and measures of school performance. A revision of the national index of disadvantage will be made when 1976 Census data became available in 1979.

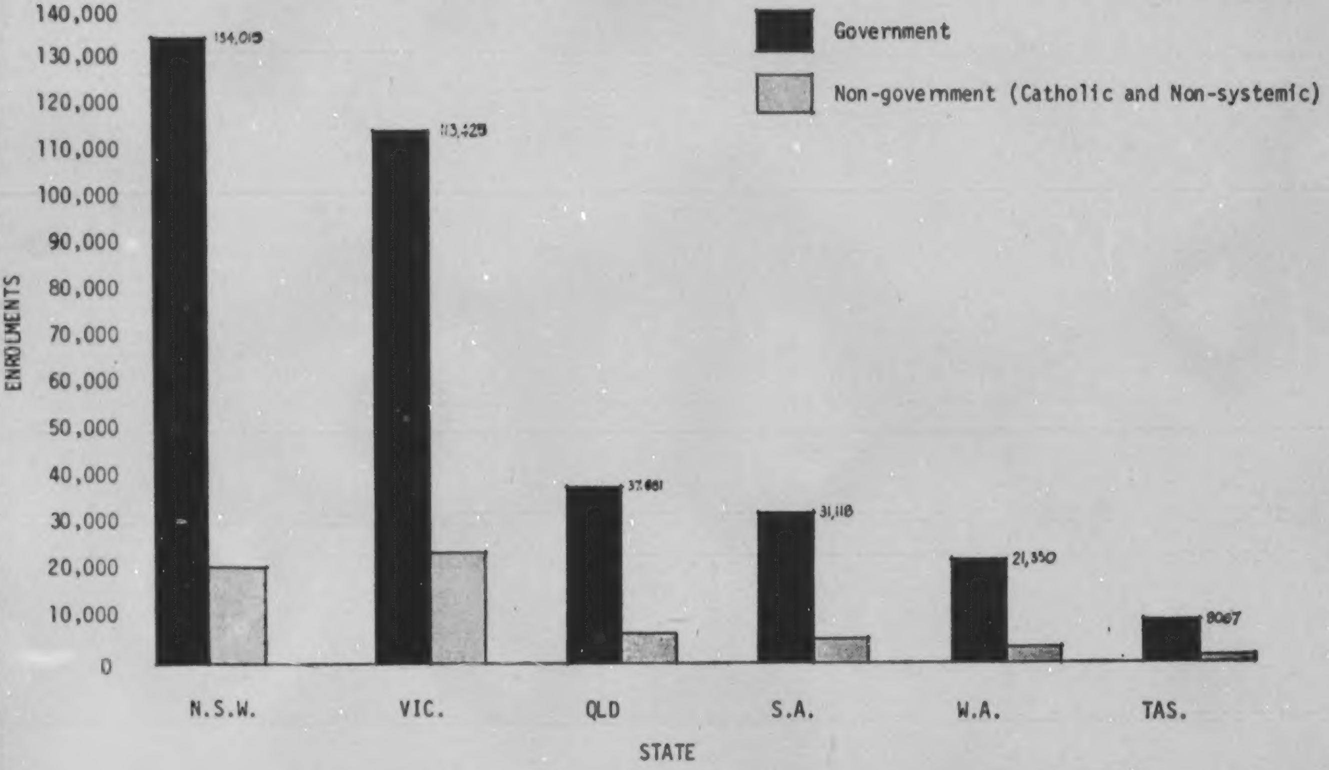
The Program is administered by State government and non-government education authorities through broadly based State and regional committees. Coordinators of the Program in each system meet biennially with a Commissioner and the Program Director as the National Task Force of the Disadvantaged Schools Program to exchange information and discuss policy issues.

The Project Basis of the Program

The Program rests on the premise that there are no known universal recipes for improved educational approaches, motivation or outcomes as they are associated with social inequality. The organisational base of the Program thus focuses on what particular projects will do for particular groups of students in their particular settings. This project-basis is the key strategy for improving the quality of education for disadvantaged children. Funds are not distributed by State committees on a per capita basis but according to the quality of proposals. Significant "lighthouse" projects are able to attract extra funds if a system believes that they are worth concentrating on with respect to the outcomes they may achieve. Quality proposals are process rather than content specific, showing evidence of the engagement of school communities in their formulation, seeking to implement the objectives of the Program and allowing for ongoing assessment and development.

FIGURE 3

ENROLMENTS IN DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS, BY STATE AND SYSTEM, 1978



What is done with resources, and who decides what is to be done are the particular emphases of the Program: extra resources should be shown to be necessary for the implementation of a project planned to improve learning outcomes, and all teachers, in cooperation with parents, students and members of the community are expected to share in that planning. Generally, decisions about projects should be made locally rather than at central level. The Program encourages the growth of new approaches some of which may eventually involve fundamental changes in school organisation and structure. Constant ongoing evaluation is encouraged on the part of administrators, teachers and parents to identify which approaches are effective and why.

Examples of Quality Projects

Operation Playground

A project implemented at St. Mary's School, Erskineville, provides an example of a quality educational program which was jointly planned at the school level by cooperative activity among teachers, parents, students, community members and tertiary students and staff. It involved the integration of all classes and curriculum areas across the school.

The project "Operation Playground" was aimed at transforming a small concrete playground for nearly two hundred children into an area containing sand, gardens, climbing structures, an outdoor stage and an amphitheatre. A lecturer in architecture at the University of Sydney together with a group of first year architecture students worked with children and teachers in designing the project. Each child kept a diary of the project from the beginning with records of each stage of development. The children themselves made scale models of the schoolground from measurements they had taken with trundle wheels, metre rules, sundials etc. that they had also made themselves. The university students also made models. The best ideas were selected and construction of the playground began. Each week the curriculum was planned by staff to feature a theme for the week. Every subject area related studies to the theme. Parents were involved from the beginning when each child produced a newsletter to explain the project. There was an official opening ceremony to mark the commencement of work and a tree planting ceremony to mark completion of gardens, both attended by a number of parents and community members. Labour had been supplied by teachers, students, children and parents over the school holidays. Parents sent extra plants for the garden. During the project children from Years 3 to 6 were divided into family groups to work on various activities. A photographic record was kept of the project, provision being made in the project application for funds to cover ongoing evaluation and the production of a slide/tape kit to disseminate the idea to other schools.[7]

Language Development Programs

Language difficulty is often a major handicap for children in disadvantaged schools, many of which have high migrant or Aboriginal populations, and most schools have devised language development programs. These feature the employment of specialist teachers and the involvement of parents as teacher aides to increase opportunities for oral discussion, to allow for small group work and to encourage the consolidation of the mother tongue as well as English. Excursions and ethnic celebrations are encouraged and equipment and materials are provided for students to report on these occasions through audio-visual media and by making their own readers.

At Footscray Technical School, Victoria, an Adult Listening Scheme has been established where some twenty local people come to the school for two to three hours each week spending thirty minutes with each student. Eighteen of the volunteers are over the age of forty and one is seventy-seven years old. Only four are parents. A community person is employed for thirty hours a week as a coordinator of the program. A Cross-age Tutoring Scheme at Richmond Technical School involves teams of five secondary students tutoring each week in three feeder primary schools. Tutors are bilingual and significant gains have been measured in self-esteem and academic performance of both tutors and students. At St. James School, Cygnet, Tasmania, listening posts, tape recorders and radio cassettes have been purchased and students are involved in plays, lecturettes, debates, mimes and movement activities. The production of puppet plays, writing of radio programs and development of slide/tape sequences has increased confidence and competence in participants. A Language Development Program at St. Ambrose's School, Brunswick, Victoria provides bilingual teachers and teacher aides throughout the school which has a 92 per cent migrant population. Italian and English are used in Year 1 and aspects of curriculum are language based in a thematic approach to learning. At Woodenberg Central School, Queensland, a Survival Reading Program provides extra staff for small group work so that all Aboriginal students can leave school with "survival" reading skills.[8]

Vocational Education Programs

The problem of early school leaving of children in disadvantaged schools has led to the development of a number of programs which focus on school-work transition. A Pre-Driver Education Program in three technical schools in Victoria is integrated with the school curriculum, and involves commerce, traffic authorities and the Road Safety Council. Service and storage facilities are provided for motor cycles. At Enmore High School, New South Wales, students work in groups of three or four per car in an Automotive Mechanics Program. They are instructed in safe working procedures with motor vehicles, learn simple servicing operations, lubrication and inspection, progress to engine tuning, and service staff and family cars with parents present. A building has been purchased for a Craft Centre at Meningie Area School, South Australia, for an out-of-school recreation program and display area. The craft program is designed as a basis for a cottage industry providing employment for ex-students. Local craftspersons tutor for four to five week periods in their specialist areas. Four schools in the Preston Area, Victoria are co-operating in the Darebin Valley Reafforestation Program. The project provides horticulture training and experience for students while an extensive recreation park for schools and community is being replanted.

Community, Health and Welfare Programs

Children attending disadvantaged schools have a high incidence of health and social problems. The Program has provided the stimulus for a number of programs involving shared action by schools and community members to improve community facilities and morale, directly influencing the children's capacity to benefit from schooling. At Mansfield Park Infants School in South Australia, Child and Parent Centres actively engage 75 per cent of families in the life of the school. Thirty students from the high school are involved in child development courses; an early childhood program caters for a large number of activities and a Parent Drop-In Centre is well patronised. Significant gains in communication skills and in raised self-esteem have been made in students and adults. A joint project for the State School and St. Anthony's School at Dimbulah in Queensland provides music, drama, movement, and art and craft experiences for students and community people. Public community meetings decided that an art/craft centre and activity area was needed and a joint management committee supervised the planning and operation of the project. A community room in the Centre, for the use of mothers, houses a small ethnic library. At St. Mary's School in Broome, Western Australia, a School Health Education Program employs a health education specialist who provides daily treatment for sores, abrasions etc., and works with school staff to provide preventative care, including vitamin supplements and fruit for the students. A number of programs provide after school activities and vacation care, outdoor education, and cultural development in disadvantaged schools.

Specific Subject Programs

Apart from the programs described above which focus on broad areas across the curriculum, additional projects are implemented in specific subject areas. Examples of these include specific courses to improve competence in mathematics, science, music and physical coordination. Even in these programs, however, attempts are made to link in with other subject areas, for example, the Physical Coordination Program at Glenroy Technical School in Victoria that provides practice and tests in physical coordination but operates in conjunction with reading skills, numeracy skills and a pastoral program.

Constraints and Tensions

While the brief descriptions above have indicated the scope of the Disadvantaged Schools Program for improving the quality of education provided in disadvantaged schools, a number of problems place constraints on the effectiveness of the Program at several levels.

At school level there are still difficulties being experienced in engaging parents in the planning and evaluation of programs. While there are notable advances in primary schools, it is especially at secondary level that more attention appears to be needed to engage meaningful parental participation and devise across-school projects. Within schools, teachers involved in individual projects may separate from the rest of the staff, operating without staff consensus and involvement. The provision of remedial teachers and other experts to work in special classes may encourage classroom teachers to abandon responsibility for the mastery of basic skills. Although there are several significant programs being developed for early school leavers, a number of secondary schools in the Program are not yet seriously tackling the implications for their educational practice of youth unemployment, nor are they concentrating on the provision of survival skills and support systems which early school leavers will increasingly need in the future.

At system level, the provision of funds for disadvantaged schools highlights the importance of seeking ways positively to assist disadvantaged children in schools outside the Program. The perennial problems of selection and continuity of staff through the retention of experienced, committed personnel have still not been solved. Inflexible regulations, concerning the ordering and purchase of materials and equipment, the employment of specialist staff and the imposition of staff ceilings, sometimes restrict the ability of schools to implement their own plans for school improvement. Political pressure in some States leads to strong agitation for a constant turnover of participating schools, although the school improvement sought through the Program depends on continuity of funding and support over a reasonably long period of time.

At Commonwealth level tensions involved in federal/state relations raise the issue of specific purpose funding and the right of the Commission to apply conditions to its grants. It is to be expected that state systems will have their own priorities and these will not always necessarily coincide with the Commission's program areas.

At all levels, considerable discussion of such issues as educational disadvantage, relevant curriculum, project and Program evaluation, and participatory decision-making has taken place since the Program's inception but there is need for much further examination of all these areas if a reasonable consensus is to be reached.

Moving Forward

Human Versus Material Resources

In the four years of the Program's operation there has been a considerable development from requests for equipment, materials and excursions to projects involving the use of human resources. Although the involvement of extra staff in schools is welcomed, because very often it is in specialist resource personnel that the most benefit can be gained, nevertheless it must be recognised that commitment of funds to teacher-aides or to extra teachers does reduce the flexibility of future funding. It is important for schools to be constantly evaluating their programs and willing to change direction if necessary, even at the risk of offending or discontinuing the funding for a person who has been appointed to a particular program. It is also vital that personnel employed through the Program understand clearly their role in relation to the whole school, and the school and its community should be responsible for the definition of that role.

Support from Systems and Institutions

The crucial importance of support for disadvantaged schools is recognised. System support both in attitudes and actions can have significant effects on schools in the Program. Several systems now differentially fund staff and resources to favour disadvantaged schools. The attitude of the principal and his or her competence and commitment are also of critical importance. There is a need for more effective consultancy support and developmental activities for both parents and teachers, including exchange visits among schools. Tertiary institutions can provide support to the staff of disadvantaged schools if they are in close proximity and the staff are aware of the assistance that can be given.

Inter-School Cooperation

Cooperation among schools in the Program is increasing. In South Australia the principals of a number of disadvantaged schools come together regularly to work on curriculum development in each of their schools. The principals discuss proposals, go back to their staffs, implement programs and then come back together to report regularly on progress being made. Cluster projects where personnel and equipment are shared among neighbouring schools are now operating in several States, and joint in-service programs are often organised for staff and parents at both government and non-government schools.

Evaluation

The Commission has already commissioned and published an evaluation of the first three years of the Program's operation.[9] Consultation with the States concerning further evaluation at State and national levels is continuing. However, a further important aspect of evaluation has been established with the promotion of action-research at school level. Each teacher in a disadvantaged school is encouraged to be a person who researches his or her action in a systematic, ongoing reflective way and adjusts programs to improve the educational experiences provided for students. Additional consultancy support may be necessary to assist this process.

Dissemination and Communication

In 1978, at the request of State Coordinators, the Commission funded a pilot program of dissemination and communication at a national level — to supplement what was already going on in systems. A wide variety of materials has been produced, ranging from brochures, to 16 mm films, to a kit of in-service activities.[10] Further work is needed on developing resources for field officers and support for school staffs to document their ideas and experiences so they can be shared with others.

Conclusion

The Disadvantaged Schools Program has been in operation for only five years so it is too early to demonstrate conclusively its long term effects. In some systems the processes of the Program have been slow to develop. However, in the majority of systems the Program is an exemplar of good resource allocation generally, demonstrating the potential impact of the project approach coupled with marginally additional resources. The school initiatives made possible in the 13 per cent of Australian schools participating in the Program, which include those thought most difficult to improve, have generated hope in those working in such schools. In most systems there is evidence for some schools of significant learning gains in basic skills areas and measurable gains in student self-esteem. Teacher morale and attendance is significantly higher, student absenteeism has decreased and community involvement is now flourishing in places where it was previously almost non-existent. Strong support for the Program exists from both school communities and national parent and teacher organisations.

The significance of the Program reaches out beyond those schools being served by it as many of the published discussions of improved school practice today in Australia refer to disadvantaged schools. The Commission has pointed out that the more effective and meaningful learning which the Program seeks to advance through close association of the school with life and with resources existing in local communities is not unique to schools in the Program. "Good education has essentially the same characteristics everywhere. It builds the capacity of people to reflect on the world and on human life in it, to employ knowledge in changing it where possible and where good reason can be found for doing so. There is no sense in which disadvantaged schools are exceptional in this regard. They are only exceptional to the degree that in the past they have been least effective in opening up these possibilities to students."[11]

Even if it is conceded that schools on their own cannot alter the reality of inequality in society, the Disadvantaged Schools Program is showing that the provision of high quality, carefully tailored educational programs will not only make schooling a more fulfilling experience for disadvantaged children but also will improve their access to full participation in society.

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THE SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL AGENCY: COMMENTS

J. O'NEILL

The first question we need to look at is not so much whether schools operate as a social or an academic agency, but who schools are for?

Compulsory schooling is available for a period of ten years, give or take some minor differences between States. Attendance between roughly the ages of 5 and 15 is not only a right in Australia but a duty enforceable by law which provides for sanctions on those parents who do not conform. By the same token, it is implicit in the arrangements of all States that all children do, in fact, have a right to 12 years of schooling, which within the government system remains free. Moreover, the rights of young people to post-school education also find expression in free universities, free CAE's and so on. Australian education in the government sector is characterized by the slogan: free, secular and compulsory. It is accepted as a universal system of schooling and one which Australians often view with pride.

Yet the work of the Poverty Inquiry and the Schools Commission itself have demonstrated that education in this country suffers from a split personality — a "do as I say, not as I do" approach.

Irrespective of all the slogans, and all the pious beliefs, our education system operates as a sorting and selecting mechanism on the part of our society. It effectively selects the non-academic sheep from academic goats. Or does it?

Certainly those who complete the terminal year of secondary school and pass the final exam, which in most cases is the means of entry into tertiary education, can be said to have succeeded academically. These kids have conformed to the values of the values of their schools, have been "locked into" the schooling processes and have come out with their piece of paper though often as our research reports indicate with considerable dissatisfaction and cynicism about their whole school life.

But what of the rest of kids? Only a third go on to Year 12, HSC, Higher Certificate or whatever it may be called. Almost 50 percent leave at the end of the compulsory years without qualifications, sometimes lacking the most basic skills into a world increasingly affected by long term structural unemployment among the young. These school leavers are generally seen to be the less bright, the ones who couldn't cope, didn't have it in them, or as one person put it to us during the Poverty Inquiry, "We have to have bearers of water and hewers of wood." Many of these students were viewed as behaviour problems willingly released by schools so that the real job of educating a selected group of our young people could be tackled without interruption or unnecessary hassle.

In fact, early school leavers fall into clear and definable groups with the overriding factor being their low socioeconomic status. Children who are poor or working class, children who themselves or whose parents are of non-English speaking and generally Mediterranean origin, children who live in country towns or more isolated rural areas and the most deprived group in our community, children who are aborigines. In all cases, girls in these groups tend to be worse off.

These young people leave school with very little in the way of academic skills but they do tend to have a highly developed sense of failure, a belief in their own inadequacy and a distaste for the sort of learning that school has offered them. Their school experience has permitted them little responsibility, little effective choice and not much dignity. They have been taught in larger classes, by less experienced teachers and their relationships with teachers have been limited and inadequate.

That these groups are selected out of the schooling system is disturbing in a society so dedicated to notions of equality and a fair go for all. However, the fact that they are is not surprising. Our schools, the number of rooms, the numbers of teachers, the range of equipment is not predicated on all these children staying on. If they did desire to do so our schools would collapse in chaos.

It is really hard not to believe that the sorts of things we do in our schools, the sorts of responses we have to the "academically" unsuccessful have been impacted into the system to ensure that only a minority of children succeed. That the competition for the scarce resource of "good" jobs is controlled and that we have a pool of unskilled and semi skilled labour to deploy throughout the less enticing jobs in factories and on production lines.

Admittedly, the situation has got a bit out of hand. The dimensions of unemployment are such that problems are emerging for the highly credentialled. There is a downward pressure in the labour market so that people who have achieved academically are forced to take lower status jobs further limiting the possibilities for those without qualifications. At the same time, there are gaps in skills among trained tradesmen in some areas, notably the building industry while others are finding their skills and abilities eroded by automation and the vast technological changes which are taking place in industry.

All this has taken some time to say and you may well ask "What has all this got to do with what is taught in schools?" I submit that who we teach or think we ought to expend the important resources of experienced teachers sophisticated equipment or complex curriculum development on is part of the answer to what our schools are doing. In other words, I believe we should be effectively and creatively teaching ALL children and not only those who are academic achievers, or more accurately those whose values and attitudes conform with our essentially elitist schooling system.

So much for the who, but it still leaves us with questions, about what. I find the dichotomy between viewing the school as a social and academic agency rather difficult to come to grips with. It is both already. Schools socialize children into a certain value system or they socialize them out. Children learn academically or they learn very little and paradoxically the longer they stay the more likely their social needs are to be met (though that is by no means inevitable). Perhaps we could solve the dichotomy by saying that schools should be agencies for learning.

There is no doubt that young people have a broad range of skills and competencies or that their often very different life-styles encompass different experiences. Yet one of the difficulties they face is that only a small proportion of these skills and experiences are recognized, much less encouraged by schools. If other than academic pursuits are available they tend to be viewed as extra-curricular activities, leisure pursuits or character building. Technical schools do provide more practical or manual courses but there are neither sufficient of them nor is their approach, in one sense, any more broadly based than that of the high school. I believe that schools should encompass a range of courses or approach existing courses with much more emphasis on where children are at and on what they want.

I am well aware I am no expert in matters of curriculum or in the complexities of how children learn so I suppose I am relying on a good old social work adage of starting where the "client" is. I know the response to this notion by some is that such an approach will erode standards and create a nation of children who cannot think creatively, who lack contact with their cultural heritage and who are neither extended nor developed as competent members of our society.

My point is we are doing precisely this now to many students in our schools. Because we denigrate their skills, capacities and experience, we reject what they *can* do, we make little of it and then we expect them to put away such things and do what *we* want them to do. In our whole attitude to their lives, we devalue children and more importantly the families from which they come. We refer to their homes as poor, as inadequate; lacking books. We go on to say that their parents are uninterested or neglectful, not interested in speaking English and so on.

By not acknowledging the dignity and value of their life-styles we make it very difficult for them to see any point of coming to an understanding of ours. Nor can we enrich our own understanding by learning from them, the imperatives of less advantaged and less comfortable lives than the ones we live.

What is clear is that schools are a social agency but that social agencies can include people in or out. Part of the findings of the Poverty Inquiry included a series of responses from the education system which young people desired which can be characterized as a desire for competence, the desire for a sense of purpose and their concern for a career. An examination of these may clarify the importance of schools acting as responsible seats of learning. For example, should schools allow the young to believe that they are preparing them for a future working life when greater and greater proportions of them will be unable to get a job. Perhaps they should be teaching survival skills so that life on unemployment benefit is made more possible or perhaps they should emphasize the whole issue of welfare rights. Certainly they *are* a social agency for all kids including those who wish to develop academic skills. What we need them to become is a social agency within the context of the real world which children live in and will work in so that they can operate positively for society as a whole and not simply for a small and relatively privileged section of it.

THE SCHOOL: AN ACADEMIC OR SOCIAL AGENCY?

The Case for the Academic Role

K. B. START

Introduction

Dogs bark and people talk. Much of educational debate for the last decade has, uncharitably, been at the level of barking and charitably talking *AT* each other rather than *TO* each other, or even better *WITH* each other. The level of discourse has been that of the entrenched political arena for that is where most of the issues arise, political not educational. Here, let us begin at least by talking *with* each other.

For the sake of the debate these two roles, the social and the academic agencies, are positioned as alternatives. Either you can have schools fulfilling the role of a social agency or of an academic agency. That is the first political trap. Cast the issues as black or white, as mutually exclusive extremes. So let us avoid that at the outset. These roles are not mutually exclusive. If they are not mutually exclusive then what is the debate about? It may be a discussion of purposes, a selection among purposes, an ordering of priorities and an allocation of proportions among those priorities among those selected purposes.

The issue therefore *is* debatable. It is not histrionic. It is a question not of this or that but how much of this and how much of that in the mix for which we have the time and the resources. THAT is the debate. Such a debate rests on value judgements not facts. Values are the cement of society. Flexibility stems from different value systems which tolerate each other and the different outcomes they produce. Disruption is the result of intolerant and markedly different value systems. But that is another question requiring a longer time.

What Are Schools For?

One argument is that schools are there to provide what children need. But the needs are so comprehensive as to make that role obviously fallacious. Children need food, warmth, water. They need security, love, affection and stability. They need stimulation and protection. Their needs span the intellectual, social, physical, emotional, moral, psychological and personal . . . to quote some of the cute phrases which appear so regularly in the opening pages of reports of Directors-General and Ministers of Education. Are schools to provide for all these needs of children? Are they to provide for some? If only some are to be met, which and who decides?

Another argument is that schools should provide for the needs of society. Certainly, if we were sure that we could define society, we might well be a step along the path of deciding its needs. Ignoring that problem, society has had, among others, social, political, economic and administrative needs. It has demonstrated an increasing need for child-minding over the past fifty years, almost an accelerating need one might add. It has the need of preparing its children for the society the child is to enter . . . so that the society can function through the provision of its workforce and a population obedient to its rules. Yet there is a conflict in that society also wants its members to be able to develop the society of the future, responding to change so that society is improved, changed for the better. To achieve that, its members must think outside the confines of current society. To do this might well put them into conflict with current society. There must therefore be a necessary balance, with its associated tensions, between the education for the current society and that for the evolving society. Too much orientation to the past or present will petrify the society. Too much orientation to the future will disrupt the current society rather than advance it.

A third argument is that schools should do what they do best. That is an interesting one. Schools being institutions evolved to fulfil certain functions and not others would sensibly do better at some than at others. By this argument schools, for their own sake, should limit themselves to what they do most efficiently.* What do they do most efficiently? What do they do efficiently? Both questions are relatively new to the educational arena and this has caused problems for schools which have no objective mechanisms for answering either question in terms of fact rather than feeling, however sincere.

The last role I wish to put to you is that schools should do what other agencies in society will not do. This could be broken into a continuum with the two extremes, those things no other agency is doing and are not worth doing anyway to those which other agencies leave but are of great worth (to whom, to the children or to the society? etc.). The problem with this approach is of course that schools can (have?) become the dumping ground for the discarded roles of others and might find that their roles are usurped. One perceives evidence of the former but little tendency to the latter in society. In such circumstances it is hard to organize an institution, for teachers to teach, for teacher training to function or to provide any kind of support service for the children. Where the role is not defined except as "anything that comes along" planning and performance is certainly in a very low key and be well nigh impossible.

A moment ago reference was made to the *last* role. Of course that cannot be as the last role must be some kind of integration of all the single roles. With this in mind the schools would have to do some juggling act. They would have to balance the needs of the child, the needs of society, their areas of effectiveness and the mopping up role, weighted especially towards those functions of some worth. That may well be what schools are now trying to do.

Agencies in Society

There are many agencies in society and schools are but one. In fact schools are but one of the agencies which educate the younger members of society. This is often forgotten whilst lay person and expert alike go to great lengths to pay public lip service to the fact.

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*It is important to note that because the school does not undertake a particular role does not infer lack of worth of that role. There are many valuable roles in society that schools do not undertake. Adoption of a role might indicate its suitability for school but not its intrinsic worth.

What are some of these agencies? There is the child herself, an input all too often completely ignored. There are the parents, the peer group, the neighbourhood, the church, the police, the child's teacher, the child's school, the educational system, the society, the ruling political philosophy, the economic structure, and the times (inflation, deflation, employment, unemployment). All these contribute directly or indirectly, to greater or lesser degree to the child's development. It is a collaborative effort, a conjoint effort. But who decides the collaboration?

This simple question puts me at odds with the Schools Commission's self-given role of educating children of parents who are *unable* or *unwilling* to do so. Their intent is clear and laudable. The words however are frightening as in the hands of groups less child orientated, less school orientated, more socially orientated and more politically orientated, it leaves the way open for totalitarian determinism. What is best for the child? Who decides this? Patently not the parent any longer as they can now be defined as unwilling and therefore overridden. Who then decides?

Can Schools Make a Difference?

If one relies on anecdotal information then there are enough stories around the place to provide evidence that a Mr. Chipps somewhere-or-other turned on a Tom Brown somewhere-or-other. On the other hand there are as many stories of negative effects of particular schools and particular teachers on particular children. One might select the story to suit the prejudice. What is the evidence? There is not a great deal.

If one looks to reasonably large studies of variation in pupils' performance one finds that the variance in school factors is seen to be between 6-8% (Plowden Studies), or as high as 15% in the O.E.C.D. or Council of Europe Studies. Variability in the specific home and in the social level is perceived by O.E.C.D./C.E. as providing the additional 45% and 40% respectively. On the other hand, provided your blood pressure will stand the strain of reference to the heredity/environment debate (debacle?) then one might see claims for a hereditary component somewhere between 40-80% with environment within which the school is entangled but rarely extracted in the heat of the inevitable confrontation, contributing the rest.

Taken overall, most people agree that over reasonably large populations of children† the contribution of the school is a fraction of the contribution of the home and the more distant aspects of the child's environment. Why? We do not know. One might argue the variance solution to some purpose. The variance of quality permitted between schools is far less than that existing in homes. This means that there are worse homes than there are schools and that the best homes are far superior to the best schools. Hence the effect of the schools would be reduced in proportion to the variance proportion. But is the variance four, five or ten times as great? Is it perhaps that schools can achieve far less than society believes them capable of and worse far less than they believe themselves?

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†The effect on specific individual children selected because of the impact of school or teacher is not denied. It is just suggested that the impact is much rarer than it is dramatic.

What Can Schools Do?

Let us look at this question in a different way. What are the many ways in which a child develops? What is the contribution of the school to each of them. A salutary exercise might be to fill in the following grid . . . the Start Grid . . . ! Down the left hand side are listed some areas of child development which education is supposed to enhance. These are taken from a selection of Ministers' and Directors' Annual Reports, policy statements or curriculum guides. Across the top are some of the agencies in society to which reference is often made when talking about influences on the child in its development. The task is to take each area of a child's development and then estimate, guess if you feel inadequate, what percentage of that child's development stems from the listed agencies of society. It sounds difficult but it is not that bad really. Try it in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Percentage Impact of Society's Agencies on Different Aspects of a Child's Development

		Society's Agencies						
		Home	*Locality*	*School*	*Church*	*Class*	*Total*	
Areas of Child Development (alphabetical)	Emotional						100	
	Intellectual						100	
	Moral						100	
	Personal						100	
	Physical[‡]						100	
	Social						100	
	Total						600	
	Total/6						100	

Which of society's agencies has the greatest overall impact on the overall development of the child? Where does the school rank among the five agencies listed? Asterisk the highest percentage in each row. Which agency contributed most asterisks? Where does the "school" stand in the rankings on the issue of most asterisks? To what area of a child's development does the school contribute most? We have considered just those of society's agencies emanating from outside the child. If you believe in a hereditary component in any of the specified areas of child development put that into the last column which has been left vacant. Of course you will now have to divide the percentages in the other columns by a figure determined by 100 minus the percentage you have ascribed to heredity. That is a bit complicated. It can be regarded anyway as heresy or not depending on fact for some, on ideology for most.

[‡] What definition of physical development did you work on? Physique, size, fitness, physical skill? Would it have mattered to your answer which one you had taken?

However let us not clutter up the debate on this issue. For the purposes of discussion let us leave the agencies to those extraneous in society to the child. That is the point of this debate. Should the school be more of a social or academic agency? What did you find? What percentages did you fit into these cells? Among those of you present and who have filled in the matrix, what was the highest and which the lowest figure in each cell? Why should there be so much variation? Do we not know what these figures are? Are they governed by fact or by fantasy? Are they "Is's" or "Oughts"?

To which area of child development did the school contribute most? Was it to the social development of the child or the intellectual development of the child?

Does, Could, Should

Because something such as a school currently contributed mainly to one aspect of a child's development does not mean that it could not contribute more to that aspect or even more to other aspects. There might well be a latency there. Nowhere do the DOES's or COULDS relate to whether the agency *should* make such a contribution to an aspect of a child's development. It may well should, be found not to, and even trickier found that it cannot make such a contribution within its current structure and the training of its teachers. That might easily be resolved by changing the school's structure and the training of its staff. That may be a decision for society. On the other hand, it makes a mockery of debate to redefine the "IS" as to what "COULD" or "SHOULD" be. A school might well perhaps could and should become a health clinic attending to the sick. It might well do this provided that wards, operating theatres and clinics for patients were developed and that teacher training included nursing and medical training. The question of whether one can or cannot change an agency of society to do specific tasks is not the debate. It is whether the agency as we know it can or should do these tasks.

To debate what changes are necessary in schools to fulfil functions for which they are not currently designed, equipped or staffed to do is another matter. You might like to redraw Figure 1 a few times and complete it three times for what school currently does contribute to a child's development, secondly what it *could* without modification do, and what it *could and should* do following modification. But then the debate has really widened out into developing a new agency in society to perform designated tasks.

Accountability

The first question on any accountability issue is to whom for what. The first part of that is not part of today's debate. Accountable for what, certainly is. In the light of your figures in Figure 1, for what should the school be accountable? Should a school be accountable for developments or performances over which it has little or no control? Should schools for example be accountable for the physical development (growth?) of children? If the children do not grow or grow well enough is the school accountable? Coupled with the Schools Commission concern for equality of outcomes, is the primary school accountable if every grade six child is not of the same height, weight and morphism?

If the school is to be accountable for that which it can change, effect, moderate, etc. then one might look back to your answers to Figure 1. Which aspects of a child's development can a school most influence? For which aspects of a child's development should the school therefore be most accountable?

Is the school accountable for the economic position of the child, or the variation in economic positions among children? Is the school responsible for the occupation of a child's father? Patently not, but in that case as father's occupation is the major index of the social class of the child, the school cannot be responsible for that aspect of a child's development. Are the analogies absurd? If they are then perhaps it is the indices which produce the absurdity. The social development of children, if it is not related to changing the father's occupational status must have other, attitudinal perhaps cognitive, possibly even intellectual or academic overtones.

Perhaps by concentrating on the intellectual functions of the school and those are what most people find they have written into those boxes in Figure 1, perhaps by concentrating on the intellectual development of children, the social development can be enhanced more effectively by the school than by its attempting direct action from a position of little impact.

Definitions Differing as well as Overt and Covert

School is undoubtedly a social agency. It is an agent of society. This paper has concentrated on what function it does and should fulfil as that agency in society. There are other definitions of school as a social agency. School as a means of changing society. That is totally and radically different. To use an agency of society as an agent to change that society can be effected by society at large changing its future structure or by groups within society wishing to change society to a format more in accord with the value systems they derive from the sociopolitical criteria they hold, or of course groups could exist outside a particular society, endeavouring to make it into another.

The criteria for such a function are of course quite different from those which form the basis of this paper. They do not arise from a reality of the existing society but from the model to which existing society is to be moved. Criteria for the model therefore override the existing reality and the debate ceases.

Conclusion

Schools are one of very many agencies in society. In fact of the many agencies in society which contribute to the development of children, schools are but one.

The debated issue is not one of polarity between schools as social or intellectual agents but where should the balance be struck and why?

The argument is advanced that schools appear to have the capacity to influence the intellectual development of children proportionally more than any other area of their development. Hence they function relatively efficiently in that area and should optimise that role though not to the extent of excluding others including that of the social development of the child.

QUALITY EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS

D. Edgar

Six months ago I might have been drawn to respond to the topic of quality education in rural schools in terms of standards, excellence, achievement of the finest possible levels of understanding. I might have spoken of the disadvantages, deficits, difficulties of small schools serviced by transitory, urban-trained teachers, locked into rural economic decline, distanced from both system services and the broader cultural contacts that make for quality living. I might, with Professor Crittenden (though that is unlikely), have suggested that educational quality rests on a "preoccupation with the highest achievement in the various forms of meaning through which human life and the world are described, explained, interpreted and evaluated, and through which human experience is expressed . . . the quality of education, whether as process or outcome, depends largely on how well it satisfies the standards of excellence that distinguishes the epistemic, aesthetic and moral domains" (Crittenden and D'Cruz, 1976: 8-9).

Now, instead, I want to suggest such views of quality are arrogant, elitist, academic and so far removed from the realities of rural education as to be downright dangerous in their implications for children in schools. The change has come from my increasing contact with people involved in the five designated areas of Victoria's Country Education Project.

The Country Education Project was established by the Schools Commission late in 1976 to find new ways of overcoming educational disadvantage in rural schools. Unlike the Supplementary Grants Program or the special purposes "Innovations" grants, it insists on area-wide programs in which schools both State and non-State, primary and secondary, share their resources and work cooperatively to improve the quality of education in rural schools. The Victorian Planning Committee decided to reject a "deficit" or even "disadvantage" philosophy and to build on resources that already existed in these areas. Rather than say you are culturally deprived, in need of help, falling behind city standards, we asked country folk to look at the advantages they had, identify the resource people living in their area, think along "learning exchange" lines and develop programs for funding that would build on strengths, not weaknesses. We also insisted that we would not, as a Planning Committee, tell them what they needed; they would do a Needs/Resources Survey in their own way and tell us what their own needs were and how they might best be met. Our role was to offer help, guidance, support personnel, to cajole them away from parochial thinking, to recognize non-formal resources for education, to see competence in a new light instead of in narrow academic terms and to be active in finding solutions to their own problems. Our jargon term for this process was "cooperative competence", a term which reflects my belief that a stress on individual competence ignores the political nature of educational activity, sets people apart in a competitive rat-race and fails to use the vast human potential of people working together and sharing what they know. We stressed, in addition, the need for broad community support and for looking at the whole rural context in relation to what goes on in the schools. The Act's wording is that funds shall be spent on programs "in relation to the education of primary and secondary students", and we interpreted this liberally as suggesting an attack on educational needs within the wider rural community.

We were aware of the problems inherent in such an approach and have reaped the whirlwind. To ask people what they need assumes they know what they lack and can define the means to fill the gap. To call for community-based elected committees invites an anti-school mentality that may deny the educational nature of the project. To allow areas to develop their own programs may run counter to meeting the basic standards of curriculum provisions necessary for survival in what will remain a competitive, certification-ridden identity market. To suggest that a farmer who can sharpen saws, a wife who grows roses, a dropout who can read and write but has no job, a leather-worker or a local garage mechanic might have skills they could transmit to school children, is to risk the ire of "professional" teacher organizations and the knee-jerk reactions of "experts". To ask teachers and schools to share their ideas, teaching materials, books, videotapes, buses, sports equipment is to cut across decades of the isolated teacher syndrome, ostrich-like self-doubt, local jealousies, and even the new-found autonomy and power of separate School Councils.

Even the Schools Commission tries to have it both ways in suggesting a key role for community participation, yet defining accountability in terms of school authorities, administrators accountable for spending public money. As D'Cruz points out, while prizing diversity and community involvement in schooling "it does not do so at the cost of sacrificing the special functions of schools" (Karmel Report, 1973: 2.21). Indeed, in favouring a core-curriculum for all schools and in talking about target standards for all schools, the Commission "clearly does not believe in educational autonomy of local communities" (Crittenden, 1975: 8). Even in its most recent Report for the Triennium 1979-81, we find the Commission saying

> "Basic general frameworks for goals and curriculum remain common across each system: what is being expanded is the degree of adaptability within those general frameworks which may be exercised at school level" (1978: 1.9).

However, they do now come down more strongly on recognizing that

> "There is no unified body of educational theory from which conclusions can be drawn which may be applied successfully in all circumstances . . . variations . . . too great for teaching to become rule-governed behaviour" (1978: 1.12).

And there is a greater stress on the qualitative side of education too. The Commission pointed out in its *Report: Rolling Triennium 1977-79* (see paragraph 3.2) that needs and standards are of two types:

> "The first type is about quantitatively measurable volumes of resources — of teachers and other types of professional and non-professional staff per stated numbers of students, about quantities of equipment and about areas of floor space per student and other aspects of the physical environment of schools. The second type concerns factors which are not so easily measurable. These include the quality

> of human resources, how effectively resources are used and combined to serve particular ends, the relative importance that is attached to meeting the particular needs of students who are markedly atypical, and how satisfying the experience of schooling is to its participants, both students and teachers."

The Commission went on to point out that it did not simply equate standards in schools with levels of resources, and that measurable resources are not alone an index of the quality of schooling. It did believe, however, that certain resource levels are a necessary, if insufficient, condition of achieving other less measurable standards of educational quality. Note, however, that the Commission still talks of "target resource standards" (para. 3.25) and that these must imply some measurement in quantifiable terms of how those resource standards relate to performance outcomes in the education of children.

Let me briefly suggest to you that using standards as a measure of quality in education is a contradiction of terms. A standard is something against which a current situation is measured. As Illich and others have pointed out, knowledge is a legitimation of social stratification and control. Who sets the standards dictates what is legitimate and what is not.

> "When the responsibility for one's child is delivered over to the institution, that child begins the process of being measured against an abstract and incomprehensible scale, and a process of repression, control and being cut down to size" (J. Riddell, 1978: 140).

How does one evaluate the quality of a child's social experience at school, the quality of relationships between and among pupils and teachers, their commitment to education, the quality of the classroom and school environment that is created? The point is they can be reflected on and assessed vaguely, but an insistence on evaluation leads away from quality towards quantifying the more objective, trivial skills and items of information that are more easily measured. Unlike Eliot Eisner who distinguishes between "instructional" objectives and "expressive" educational objectives (see D'Cruz, 1978: 198) accountability in terms of reaching certain standards of performance leads away from those goals, which "must be indeterminate excellences", either of character or of intellect.

Garth Boomer in a recent paper titled "Negotiating the Curriculum" puts this point well when he asks are we more concerned with using packages in schools which "mean that the brain can be kept mainly in neutral and still have the illusion of getting somewhere", or "Are schools dedicated to the promotion of the child's power to learn and ultimately to learn independently of instruction and guidance?" (1978: 6-7). In this he is at one with the Country Education Project's insistence on issues of power and shared decision-making:

> "significant change will come only through collaboration at all levels. Individual action is usually contained and rendered ineffectual when it begins to threaten the established order" (p. 9).

He contrasts two models of learning. In the model of teacher-dominated curriculum "Motivation", the student is cajoled into accepting a standardized content and whatever mode of learning the school dictates. In what he calls the "Negotiation" model the teacher's power is not denied, but there is collaboration in exploring what is to be learned and reflection or "valuing" takes the place of "testing" to evaluate what has been learned. Boomer sees the Motivation model as

> "a recipe for 'standards' (that is, by definition, mediocrity) where many will fail, while Model B (the Negotiation model), if adopted, will lead to dynamic exploration and *rigorous* pursuit of quality by all who contract to be in it" (p. 14).

For that is the crucial difference. Where people are involved in defining their own interests, concerns and needs, where they are given some power to express and negotiate the means of achieving their goals, and where the "expert" teacher, far from abdicating responsibility in some soft and idiotic "progressive" humanism, actively responds and works out collaboratively what can be achieved, then that involvement leads to rigor instead of slackness, quality instead of merely meeting standards.

And all the elitist academic talk about quality obscures that distinction. For what is rigor unless it is an ardent pursuit of truth, a willingness to work towards understanding, the capacity to apply oneself not just to what might be "enjoyable" but to hard work for which there is a clear purpose? Quality does not lie in content, it lies in process; it is not merely looking at the "highest achievements of mankind" it is striving to achieve excellence for oneself. And despite mountains of research on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, on "needs" motivations, on "learning by doing" on individual differences, on goal-setting behaviour, what do we have the "quality educationists" purveying? A barrow-load of rubbish about high culture versus popular culture, the arts versus the mass media, the importance of traditional subject disciplines versus "integrated" studies, the basic 3 R's (still), literacy and numeracy narrowly defined, competence only in intellectual and academic terms, tests, exams, standards which all deny the manifold qualities of humankind. As Pierre Bourdieu reveals with impeccable logic, those in positions of power in society treat the cultural heritage as a natural gift rather than as a social gift. The cultured elite assumes that only they can appreciate fine art, yet they insist that the masses should learn about high culture, in a way that both hides the practices of incantation which call forth "skills that are seen as natural gifts, when in fact they are inherited and acquired", and neglects "in its teaching methods and techniques and its criteria when making academic judgements, to take into account the cultural inequalities between children of different social classes" (Bourdieu, 1976).

Thus in the context of rural education, it is nonsense to talk of standards if one is to obtain quality, especially if those standards are set by "urban academics".

When I stand on the roadside at Tubbut in far East Gippsland, being harangued, pleaded with, praised, attacked, urged on about what the Country Education Project is doing for people there, I find the Schools Commissioners' zeal for "basic general frameworks", "common goals", "basic intellectual skills" a little sad and remote from real life, even a little laughable. When I hear that they have used some of their "Mobility Program" funds to take old Teddy to the Sydney Show, or some parents to the Orange fair, my academic bureaucratic nerves shudder defensively as I wonder how "educational" such activities are, how one explains to "school-based" proponents why it is worthwhile. But listen to the anger, the despair, the excitement and involvement in their voices, and you realize the project has hit its mark. The slides and tapes, their stories about things seen and done, all give the town "something to talk about". The man who says in the tiny schoolhouse that he'll have to drive fifty miles every night and morning to collect his daughter from the camping trip because she's "scared of the dark" but doesn't mind because she's never been anywhere like that, is not wrong when he says of the Country Education Project, "If it works, it's the best bloody thing invented since the bloody wheel." The woman who says she's looking forward to learning pottery when the mobile craft van gets going (for kids in the daytime, for parents at night) has never been out of Gippsland and is not just being fed "frills and fancies". Her children who attend the local school of fourteen, were scared and bullied at Delegate in New South Wales when the "Field Day Program" started, but now won't allow themselves to be pushed aside from the drinking taps, enjoy the bigger school, meeting new friends, playing sports properly. Is that quality education? I suggest it is. The cry of the oldtimer when the Country Education Project was first explained, "For God's sake save the children . . . you can't save us", is tragic but not true. The only way to save the children is through them as well.

Our Planning Committee is meeting in the country areas now and not in Melbourne. And I would much prefer the sort of frontal attack we got at Ouyen in the Mallee Tracks area (being accused of backing down on our "community philosophy", of trying to bring in the "experts", of failing to communicate adequately, of being "urban academics", all partly true, partly untrue) to the timidity of the mothers at Bendoc who cooked an excellent lunch for us but were too scared to stay and eat with us, leaving us with the teacher and his wife and one lady from the School Council. That teacher has a long battle, but he's succeeding slowly. For him the Country Education Project's money has enabled his students to get out of the valley for the first time. Their trips are recorded in photos and words in books the children are making for themselves, far superior in quality to the laundered foreign texts that pass for reading programs in our schools.

We resisted requests for money to rebuild local halls, yet a moment of weakness led the committee to provide a toilet at a sportsground. That minor expenditure has led to a revival of public use of the ground, the hall, the town itself with enormous social and educational gains for the children and their parents. The mere provision of portable lighting equipment in another area has enabled over twenty local drama groups to link with one another and with the schools in an area-wide drama development program. The funding of tennis coaching, learn-to-swim campaigns, family relationships workshops, camping trips and so on may sound gimmicky and non-educational but they cut to the heart of rural educational disadvantage: the lack of self-respect, social competence and involvement in the excitement of learning out of which true rigor and quality education arise.

Such involvement can only come through active negotiation in the process of learning, through sharing the teacher's power to define what shall be taught, participating in deciding the strategies to be used and having the confidence to challenge a system that fails to allow that sort of "engagement". As Pateman says we should be able, both teachers and students, to

- Question an unreasonable assertion
- Say we don't understand if we don't understand
- Pause to think
- Say we don't know if we don't know.

And schools should be "dedicated to the promotion of the child's power to learn and ultimately to learn independent of instruction and guidance" (Boomer).

But while we stick to a notion of "quality" based on "standards" and a model of motivation as "prodding" rather than "negotiating" we perpetuate mediocrity, disengagement, lack of involvement, commitment and rigor.

What I have said obviously holds for all education, not just rural education. But it is more pressing in the rural context because there more than elsewhere children are dependent upon a pedagogy that defines as irrelevant or inferior those skills, competencies, interests and commitments most likely to be fruitful in developing a "negotiated curriculum" of rigor and quality. I am convinced that improving the quality of rural schools is less a matter of "bringing them up to scratch" in terms of buildings, equipment, libraries, even staffing numbers, than it is a matter of building on those qualities and capacities that give rural people their unique strength. Quality I suggest depends upon respect and cooperation between teacher and those taught. A professionalizing ideology which denies that others are competent, rejects sources of support because they are "untrained", refuses to negotiate needs, interests and strategies, will end in lowering not enhancing the quality of education.

That is not what the Country Education Project in Victoria wants. We want to develop competent and resourceful people who can engage with commitment in educational issues and cooperatively improve the quality of what is taught in rural schools.

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CURRICULUM AND SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

E. DAVIS AND H. WATSON

Before attempting to review some of the relationships between curriculum and social disadvantage it might be useful if all of us examined our own basic attitudes and feelings about schools in general. Firstly, because curriculum at the very least is set within the context of schools; secondly, because broad definitions of curriculum involve many aspects of "schooling"; and thirdly, because our personal attitudes towards schools and schooling greatly influence what we believe can be accomplished through the curriculum. Therefore, examining our own attitudes on this should help identify different starting points, biases and expectations in any discussion that might follow.

A useful checklist of possible, albeit very broad, attitudes towards schools has been suggested by John Holt in his fairly recent book, *Instead of Education*.[1] He suggests the following five kinds:

1. "The schools are basically OK. They should spend less money, be a little more strict and conventional, and not teach so many fancy ideas. But on the whole they are doing a good job."
2. "The schools are basically OK. But to do their work they need newer and better techniques and tools—new buildings, modern equipment, computers, many more teachers and specialists, higher salaries, smaller classes, more racial integration (or perhaps less), up-to-date textbooks, new curricula, new ways of controlling children, more specialists to take care of the growing numbers of children who don't or won't fit, special discipline schools for the troublemakers, and so on."
3. "The schools would be OK, if they just treated poor or non-white or loser kids as well as they treat rich white winner kids, or if their curriculum were not so racist, or sexist, or capitalist, or trivial, or out of date."
4. "The schools have basically good purposes, to make children informed, critical, intelligent, democratic, honest, and in other ways virtuous, but they will not be able to carry them out until they become very different kinds of places and treat children in very different ways."
5. "The schools have basically bad purposes; they cannot be made good places for children, for teaching, learning, intelligence, or growth, until those purposes are taken away from them; and these purposes cannot be taken away by people working in schools, but only by the general public."

From the title of Holt's book, *Instead of Education*, you can probably guess the attitude which he now holds. The authors of this paper would not feel misrepresented if they were identified primarily with attitude 4, seasoned slightly with some items from attitudes 3 and 2 (in that order). Attitude position 5, however, is not being dismissed out of hand.

Having introduced these distinctions we would like to outline a perspective first presented in a paper by Ed David[2] which helps us examine some important distinctions and possible dilemmas when developing curriculum for students designated as "socially disadvantaged".

The perspective has two main components which have been termed GAP and DIRECTION. The gap is in values, expectations, attitudes, style and language between the school and the local community, particularly between the school and its students. The direction refers to the aims and purposes determined for the curriculum, i.e., the personal qualities, characteristics, knowledge and skills that are being encouraged, groomed and promoted through curriculum activities and experiences.

The very fact that there is an acknowledged gap between the values, language and style of many of the students and their parents on the one hand and the school in a disadvantaged area on the other, indicates that on many issues there is not a consensus on these aspects. Gaps are evident even between students and parents and between schools and labour market demands. How then is it possible to mutually discover the direction the curriculum should be taking?

This paper will attempt to examine some of the problems and put forward some approaches that might be helpful with regard to closing the gap and determining the direction. At this point we would like to propose that the problem of determining the most appropriate direction applies equally to all schools but that the gap problem would seem to be *the* identifying feature of disadvantaged schools. A related proposal that we would like to make now (and develop further throughout the paper) is that while the direction could have common elements in terms of raising agreed upon kinds of understandings and skills in students, the gap problem is likely to occur in ways and forms fairly unique to the situations and people involved.

Diversity of Approaches and Offerings

One approach that needs to be given very serious consideration is that of promoting even greater diversity than now exists through school level action-research and where the evaluations and results are made public. The approach does not directly provide answers to the gap and direction problems but is an overall strategy that could supply the kinds of insights necessary to tackle these problems. Peter Musgrave, in a paper entitled "Changing Society: Some Underlying Assumptions of the Karmel Report",[3] makes such a plea. He says:

> "It would seem that a large number of action-research projects throughout Australia and in every type of educational institution might cause just such a ferment. Research never meant much to the doctor in the hospital or to the industrialist in the factory till he saw results that improved his efficiency. Research will never mean much to the practising teacher till he sees it serving his needs in the school. Projects generated by teachers and open to the view, to the praise, and criticism of other practitioners and the public alike, could serve this end. Evaluation of what is attempted would, unlike in the present

> large-scale programs, be built into the method used. Such evaluation, though rigorous, need not be strictly scientific in nature, but could be pragmatic and even retrospective. Evaluated action is not the same as experimental method.
>
> The problems examined would presumably be those of local interest so that the involvement of local citizens would go hand in hand with devolution to the school. Because there are many localities with differing problems, there would inevitably be many diverse small programs, though in some cases links would be possible between those studying similar problems, for example, those concerned with migrants or with the possibility that the most academically able might be retarded "in order to reduce the range of difference" (3.22). Such cooperation could be carried out not only by experts or teachers but also by interested and involved local laymen.
>
> This diversity of approach would, furthermore, match the contemporary variety of educational theory. There is as yet no one answer to most educational problems. Each theoretical approach demands a differing way of tackling the problem. The collection of the results from many diverse programs might enable us to come to a somewhat fuller knowledge of educational theory."

However in making his plea for diversity Musgrave raises a dilemma:

> ". . . since we are a culturally diverse society, the educational needs or demands of each group will be different and this fact supports the plea for diversity made above. It equally indicates that any vestige of the old definition of equality must go. Schools will grow to be more and more unequal. Yet even in saying this we must remember that seeing equality more in terms of diversity could easily come to be an ideological rationalization for supporting much that today is seen as unfair."

We will discuss later in the paper how D'Urso raises this very dilemma in his discussion of "Hidden Realities within the School". It is enough to say at the moment that we should be aware of the dilemmas inherent in seeing equality more in terms of diversity.

Musgrave goes on to advocate that "a vast program of well-publicised action-research" might ensure that "very varied achievement, paralleling very varied educational need, much more readily matched the differing aspirations of the many plural groupings in Australia".

The question here is whether the aspirations of different groups in Australia (regarding aims and objectives and purposes of education) are very varied or whether the problems and suggested solutions of achieving those aims and objectives are very varied. If it is the former then it is more of a direction issue, if it is the latter then it is more of a gap issue. Whichever of the two is the more critical issue, anything which helps teachers improve their curriculum development and curriculum evaluation skills will enhance the kinds of action-research, evaluation and publicising that Musgrave is advocating. To this extent, the initiatives currently being taken at the national level by the Curriculum Development Centre and the Schools Commission to encourage and support school level development and evaluation can help promote worthwhile experimentation, adaptation and diversity.[4] Most State Departments and many schools also are developing strategies and attitudes that can help in this respect.

D'Urso goes further than Musgrave in looking at the problems of tackling equality through diversity. He focuses on the dilemma raised earlier when he makes the point that "the pressures on all educational institutions in the corporate industrial state are towards greater 'rationalization' and 'efficiency' in the conduct of teaching and learning". Thus the diversity alternative must break out of the technocratic logic of tighter coordination with other social and economic institutions. The disadvantaged will remain disadvantaged if the alternatives tried are within the logic or framework where

> "The 'hidden curriculum' of the school leads the young to internalize such norms as the hierarchical disposition of power and acquiescence in one's own powerlessness, compliance with authority, job fragmentation and extrinsic job motivation and external direction and evaluation of one's work and worth."[5]

One extension of this argument is the advocacy of deschooling, a point of view which Holt now finds himself holding. To him and some others it is a real alternative. He can see no good in schools which are compulsory, coercive and competitive and where the attempt is to make the child a winner. Where there are winners, there are losers, and more effort can be spent developing the win/lose ethos than looking at the overall development of the child.

Without wishing to dismiss the very pertinent arguments put forward by the deschoolers, it must be expected that schools will be with us for many years to come; in the meantime, attempts must be made to improve the curriculum activities and experiences of *all* students.

Research that Needs to be Done

If the challenge is taken up on Musgrave's terms (i.e., more school level action-research and evaluation in an atmosphere of general acceptance of diversity throughout the country) then some fundamental researchable ideas and issues need to be proposed and kept in mind to help focus the overall efforts being made.

We would suggest that schools—disadvantaged schools in particular—encourage their teachers to concentrate on the following kinds of questions:

- what are the real and specific problems facing teachers and students in their own schools? (Are there some general characteristics and problems or do these vary from school to school and within schools?)
- what kinds of curriculum activities, processes and materials might be more appropriate for which groups or kinds of disadvantaged students?

- what kinds of organizational arrangements, classroom conditions, support services (inside and outside the school), attitudes, styles, values and roles (of teachers, principals, parents and consultants) might be more appropriate for which groups or kinds of disadvantaged students?
- how valid and/or general are the hypotheses about the characteristics and qualities of disadvantaged students (e.g., their purported relative unfamiliarity with ordered, structured routinized experiences and with planning for the future; their disinclination to delay gratification or to be motivated by an internalised achievement ethic; their unclear self-concept and low sense of self-pride, uniqueness and individuality (i.e., their perception of themselves as "pawns" rather than as "movers"); their inappropriate or insufficient forms of communicating, especially with regard to written and spoken language)?
- do students vary with regard to their preferred learning *styles*? (What are the implications of understanding and communicating through forms which are not typically the basis of school learning and expression, e.g., through visual imagery, the arts, etc.?)

In summary, action-research should attempt to distinguish between different aspects and kinds of disadvantage and attempt to generate appropriate responses to specific problems. It should try to reveal the nature of different kinds of gaps and to help determine the significance of these gaps with regard to the learning and personal development potentials of all students.

Gap problems can be understood and to some extent overcome by applying empirical investigation and research approaches to them.

Direction issues on the other hand are much more dependent upon value-laden assumptions and prescriptions. Where it might be worth going is less of an empirical question than how to get there.

While we wait for the results and evaluations of the prescribed action-research program, and just in case the prescription dies on the vine, we should review what we have available already to work on and to think about. The next sections, then, will review some of the more promising ideas that exist in the literature if not yet in the schools.

Closing the Gap

How then to close the gap? Bullivant identifies four main components that should be considered when setting up or developing the teaching-learning process. These are:

1. Context (basically the cognitive schematas or structures that children bring to the learning situation, together with their values and interests).
2. Content (degree of relevance and level of difficulty of the subject matter).
3. Communication (mainly the language or languages used).
4. Interaction setting (arrangement or desks, use of displays, etc.).[8]

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Many teachers today would agree with Paulo Freire's thoughts that we must start with what the children have in terms of their own experiences, language and values, and work to widen their perspective. Yet the fact that some children are black not white, that some have a less elaborate language code, that some cannot speak English, that some are materially poor, that many come from broken homes and in some cases the fact that they are female, leaves them disadvantaged in terms of life chances and power within the dominant socio-cultural system. Some kind of compensatory activities and experiences would seem to be called for.

The "deficiency" is seen as not being able to cope with the essentially white Anglo-Saxon content of Australian schooling. Compensation generally takes the form of improved teacher/pupil ratios, improved physical surroundings, a more experiential program, withdrawal and intensive language lessons. The idea here is to channel the children back into the "normal" stream so they can compete with others on the "real" win/lose content of education.

The assumption that migrants, aborigines or children from broken homes are in some way deficient is essentially a middle-class white one. At the same time it must be said that such assumptions are implicitly and often explicitly accepted by many people in the minority sub-groups and sub-cultures. The Marlboro or Benson and Hedges man is still the idealized version of what the bulk of the population in industrialized societies is worth aspiring to. He is the winner. A central dilemma, then, is how to improve curriculum offerings without reinforcing the kinds of attitudes and values that perpetuate the winner/loser kind of mentality.

At the *classroom* level Bullivant's recommendations point towards fundamental aspects of the teaching-learning situation which can be influenced to the advantage of students by any moderately aware and sensitive teacher. In brief, Bullivant is advocating that:

- teachers must be more aware of what it is the children are bringing to the learning situation. They can only do this by involving the community in the school, being involved in the community itself, and genuinely respecting unfamiliar differences.
- the content of the curriculum should not expose a gap between the children's experiences, knowledge, behaviours and values and those of the school's.
- the communication between the teacher and the child should not emphasize the superiority of one language form in a way that makes the child feel "a cultural non-person" because she/he uses the "wrong" language.
- the interaction setting should be such that children from all ethnic, social and family backgrounds can work together in a way that takes advantage of the different things that they bring to the classroom situation.

All of these would seem to be recommendations primarily for closing the gap between where the student is and where the school is.

Case Studies

In 1976, with several others, I (Hugh Watson) attempted to establish in the Causeway area of Canberra a "school" for school-refusers. The Causeway was long regarded as the end of the road in Canberra for housing and it had a high proportion of migrant families, one parent families, and children with truant or criminal records.

A group of middle-class "evangelists" (and I am including myself under that term) lived in a house in the Causeway and ran various recreational activities on an ad hoc basis. We identified at least twenty children of school age who were not attending school. With the help of Narrabundah Primary School, I was appointed as a teacher in the Causeway. The idea we worked on was to get the kids (aged between five and eighteen years) involved in a group education exercise. By living in the Causeway, we had established a rapport with the children that I felt would have been impossible in any present school situation.

However, in closing the gap we were limiting the proposed curriculum to what we thought was possible: the survival skills of car and bike maintenance, understanding licence forms, hire purchase agreements, and basic business principles (as some of the children helped in a shop we ran from the house).

Our mistake was in assuming that by closing the gap we were automatically setting appropriate directions, that the children were bringing little or nothing to the learning situation and that we could determine their needs in a limited and probably limiting way. As it was, the scheme hardly got off the ground because of bureaucratic inertia in several government departments. Our house was closed down and our contact with the children lost.

A second attempt with a Special Education Class at Narrabundah Primary School in 1977 brought forward similar dilemmas. Determined to remove as many of the institutional pressures as possible and to create a social situation of happy communication, I lost sight of the direction and found again that though I had helped close the gap between myself and the children, I had not provided them with enough learning experiences—I had distorted the direction.[7]

Determining the Direction

How then can we determine the direction? Essentially there would seem to be a number of generally agreed upon AIMS in education which can be stated in terms of personal characteristics and qualities. These are the developments of:

1. Cognitive processes and various primarily academic skills (justified mainly in terms of further academic or other studies, employment, and general living).
2. Personal/social/cultural identity and worth for self-confidence, autonomy and critical awareness (included under this would be creativity and expression through various art and craft forms, music, sports, etc.).
3. Social, economic and political awareness and skills for responsible, participatory and effective citizenship.

These aims in one form or another are generally accepted as being educationally legitimate for all students.[8] However some children are more advantaged than others with regard to these even before they begin school and aside from whatever the schools are able to provide.

Particularly in disadvantaged schools, different approaches may be necessary to overcome gap problems in order for disadvantaged students to move in the same desired directions as any other student. But different approaches to overcoming gap problems could distort the directions as defined by the aims above. It is important here to recall D'Urso's worry that greater rationalization and efficiency in education will institutionalize diversity in a way that the disadvantaged will remain disadvantaged. Ways must be found to close gaps while not distorting, or preventing progress in, desired directions, otherwise some students would be diverted from or fall short of their maximum potential for realizing the above three aims. Similarly, dedicated attempts to achieve the aims (i.e., move in the desired direction) with a single-minded, one-best-approach strategy, runs the risk of gaps not being sufficiently closed for many students who will then miss the bus going in the right direction for their own and society's benefit.

As suggested earlier (looking at Bullivant's components of the teaching-learning process) the solutions partly can be worked out in the classrooms. But this attacks only part of the problem because it attacks only part of what constitutes school activities and experiences (i.e., only the classroom situations and primarily the gap problem aspects of curriculum).[9] Barry Hill in his book *The Schools* advocates approaches that go far beyond prescriptions for closing the gap, and which extends the attack to all aspects of the school experience. He talks about schools becoming forums for parental and community confrontation and conflict and encouraging parents to make decisions about their children's education on the basis of informed opinion and debate. He also suggests that schools can and should include particular kinds of curriculum content and certain kinds of social experiences within the *whole* school for disadvantaged students otherwise these students "are destined to be marginal participants in community life, consumers, commuters, triennial voters—essentially spectators, of the public realm".[10] We can see Hill as being firmly in the fourth category of Holt's attitudes to schools (outlined at the beginning of this paper).

At this point mention can be made of the Curriculum Development Centre's program into "Core Curriculum and Values Education". Essentially this is a program which will help examine and make recommendations about direction, although gap problems are bound to crop up and require consideration. In some form or other all the claims and ideas presented in this section of the paper will be reviewed by the program's working party. The aims suggested by us at the beginning of the section, the ideas of Bullivant, Hill, Claydon *et al.* and many other people will have to be closely understood and examined in the context of the real needs of *all* students and the possibilities for Australian society in the present and future. It should go without saying that this includes the needs of disadvantaged students which, as we have already indicated, we regard as being essentially the same as any other students.

What the working party might make of the following kind of prescription remains to be seen:

> ". . . I would suggest that we have in our curriculum a compulsory section for all to learn comprising five core elements. These are *communicative competence, political and economic competence, numeracy competence, moral and social education, environmental awareness*. The aim of all these is to deliberately equip all children, whether ethnic or indigenous, with the *survival knowledge and skills* they need to live in our type of society as it is and cope with it when adults. Hopefully, by understanding how it works in such areas as control over power and social-economic resources, they may want to do something about reducing its grosser imperfections."
>
> (Bullivant, "Planning the Curriculum for Poly-ethnic Education", 1977, p. 11.)

In their book *Curriculum and Culture*, Claydon, Knight and Rado list five measures to assist in the transformation of the disadvantaged and disadvantaging school to an educative school. Their theme is "difference in the context of the contemporary Australian school: cultural heterogeneity and how to utilize it, instead of bemoaning it as a problem for the teacher". Where the value of cultural diversity is genuinely accepted then the following measures, or kinds of approaches, could be considered—perhaps genuine understanding and acceptance will occur only after their suggested measures are applied. The five measures are:

1. A schedule of home visiting and teacher participation in neighbourhood affairs.
2. Carefully constructed surveys of paternal aspirators, expectations, and attitudes to questions of educational significance.
3. Creation of open-membership parent councils based upon the major ethnic groupings to be found within the parent body.
4. Establishment of an instrument of information dissemination with a wide circulation among parents.
5. Institution of "work in" and "work out" programs in the school designed to provide experiential evidence for students and parents alike that cultural differences do not destine people for the lower rankings in the workforce by any law of genetic or ethnic inferiority.

These recommendations like many others on this topic can be seen as concentrating mostly on closing the gap but they do have implications for direction.

The authors make it clear that these recommendations would fail to win active allegiance from the pluralist community if they were not seen to be the base upon which was constructed a bilingual and multicultural teaching and learning program.

The recommendations are not as radical or far-reaching as Barry Hill's but in many ways are similar in intent to his. We leave readers to work out which of Holt's attitude positions Claydon *et al.* appear to hold.

Dilemmas

We would like to finish by bringing together for discussion some of the dilemmas touched upon in this paper:

1. In attempting to close the gap teachers may try to disown the culture of which they are likely to be a part and therefore not provide the student with a model of the kinds of knowledge values, attitudes and behaviours accepted and rewarded in our society.

2. Solutions formulated and implemented at the local level although successfully closing gaps run the risk of disadvantaging students with regard to the kind of direction that is necessary to take these students towards full personal and social strength.

3. Advocating diversity among schools may indiscriminately institutionalize disadvantaging forms and perpetuate acceptance of disadvantaging schools and curriculum experiences.

4. The best that has been thought, done and said within the cultural heritage of Australian society must be retained but without preserving and promoting cultural elitism.

5. Emphasis on avoiding fostering cultural separatism or assimilation can run the risk of ignoring the practical, personal and social importance of inducting students into the skills and customs of the dominant culture.

6. Somehow inducting students into the dominant culture has to be done in such a way that they are likely to be critical of its undesirable elements, prepared to defend its best elements and willing to contribute to its continuing development for the personal and social well-being of *all* its people.

7. Schools have the function of discriminating between the winners and losers; parents, business and industry, and students themselves want schools to do this, i.e., "Make My Kid a Winner" (Holt).
   Can schools be interesting, lively and humane while the demands persists? i.e., while they remain compulsory, coercive and competitive.

   Isn't there inevitably *more* pressure on disadvantaged schools to "make my kid a winner" and thereby sustain the win/lose aspects of our society and culture? Doesn't this make it even harder than for other schools to provide meaningful, enjoyable and humane curriculum experience?

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[3] Musgrave, P.: "Changing Society: Some Underlying Assumptions of the Karmel Report". In D'Urso, S. and Smith, R. (eds.), *Changes, Issues and Prospects in Australian Education.* U.Q.P., 1978.

[4] For examples:

(a) The CDC currently is jointly funding with ERDC a program to help teachers improve their curriculum evaluation approaches.

(b) The title of the Centre's standing conference held in May 1978 was "Scope and Limits of School Based Curriculum Development: Leadership Roles and Responsibilities".

(c) The first phase of the Centre's new program, "Education for a Multicultural Society" will offer curriculum development grants related to building up teacher expertise at the school level in course design, the development of teaching skills, the development of teaching materials for community language and culture courses and for the development of courses in particular subject areas, e.g., health education, the expressive arts, career education, etc. for schools which have a multicultural population and the development of teacher expertise to use the community as a resource.

(d) The Schools Commission Disadvantaged Schools Program and Innovations Program.

[5] D'Urso, S.: "Hidden Realities within Schooling". In D'Urso and Smith (eds.), cited above, p. 51.

[6] Bullivant, B. M. (ed.): *Educating the Immigrant Child: Concepts and Cases.* Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1973, p. 137, Modern Education Series.

[7] For much more on these personal experiences see Watson, H.: "Compensatory Education: Theory and Practice". In Mulford, Hughes and Burkhardt (eds.), *A.C.T. Papers on Education,* 1977-78. (A publication of the School of Teacher Education, Canberra College of Advanced Education.)

[8] A similar proposal can be found in Claydon, Knight and Rado: *Curriculum and Culture: Schooling in a Pluralist Society.* Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1977, p. 41.

[9] In more recent writings on "poly-ethnic education", Bullivant has concentrated on direction problems and has suggested what any curriculum would need to include in its "core", e.g., see "Curriculum Problematics in a Poly-ethnic Context", paper presented to the Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Canberra, 11-13 November 1977; and "Planning the Curriculum for Poly-ethnic Education", unpublished working paper prepared for a conference in 1977 but not given.

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SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE: REFLECTIONS AND CONJECTURES UPON ITS RELATION TO SCHOOLING

L. F. CLAYDON

In what follows I seek to provide a perspective rather than a comprehensive prescription or a procedural model.

I will attempt to order what we know rather than indulge in novel speculations or pretend to new enlightenments.

Perhaps disappointingly what I say may well be familiar. I can only point out that the area of disadvantage is by now a massively researched area which has received great attention in terms of information dissemination.

What we see as yet to be fully accomplished in our work with teacher teams in Melbourne is the task of taking hold of what we know and shaping it into a living controllable idea. We work towards possession of gestalt.

The nearer we get the easier it becomes to plan strategies and tactics for practice.

In Australia, as in any other culturally diverse society, there are a number of basic social groups. I refer to those groups marked out by possession of distinctive systems of belief, norms of action and general ways of conduct. These systems apply to both the public and private aspects of living. They underpin and explain the values and loyalties of the larger number of individuals in the group. Their variety leads to talk of cultural pluralism.

Cultural difference is often linked to racial and ethnic origin. The difference is from what is frequently referred to as the dominant cultural group. As is equally well known, in the case of the western democracies of Australia, Britain and the United States, the dominant group is given to be that of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. There are many, however, who would argue that this broad category must be further restricted. There is a ruling power group inside this large classification. Indeed, some argue that social class is itself a basic grouping. The position has produced notions such as the culture of poverty.

It is unnecessary for the purposes of this paper to enter into the debate upon these refinements. They do not affect the general point that there tends to be a systematic connection between level of socio-economic status and the degree to which a particular basic social group, as defined previously, approximates or differs from the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment. Since a similar connection between level of education and socio-economic status has also been discerned, it follows that approximation to or difference from the dominant culture group is also related to educational success. The less the difference the higher the level. To deviate from the dominant culture is therefore to be disadvantaged.*

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*In this paper I have tended to use ethnic groupings as illustrative of this complex set of relationships. However, what is said can apply with equal force to sub-groups of the so-called "native" Australian community. See Chapters 4 and 5 of *Curriculum and Culture*, Chapter 2 of *The Urban School*, and Michael Liffman's *Power for the Poor* which was published this year.

These tendencies and relationships indicate processes which are perpetuated by the institutional workings and structures of the society. The process of institutional discrimination may be deliberate and approved, as in South Africa. It may be covert and generally resisted, denied rather than encouraged or applauded. Arguably, this is the case in Australia, Britain and the U.S.A.

But simply because the disadvantaging process is covert and generally discouraged as in, say, Australia, does not allow us to assume that it is merely accidental and haphazard. Secondly it may be quite as severe in its effects as in cases where discrimination is publicly approved. Covert processes may lead people to "blame the victim". The person is free to better himself it seems: so why doesn't he do so? The disadvantaged may thus bear an additional burden of psychological guilt. One is reminded of the dole bludger syndrome here. Finally, even where the disadvantaging process is generally deplored, it is still likely to be the case that some open and deliberate discrimination is practised.

Nevertheless, when the professed values and institutional goals of society at large do not condone discrimination against certain groups, we may rationally address ourselves to preventing such disadvantaging processes. We are morally obliged to remedy the effects where prevention did not occur. Either enterprise commits us to an attempt to understand how disadvantage works. As I have already suggested the process operates through social institutions. Schooling is a social institution. Plainly then, teachers are fortunately placed should they wish to achieve an understanding of the process. However, I do not think they will succeed if they are immured and insulated in closed classrooms which shut out the social influences which are operative in the community beyond the gates. I think it is insufficient for teachers to devote themselves exclusively or even principally to the learning characteristics and needs of individual children. To understand the institutional process teachers must deal in terms of social networks as they occur within and between families, peer groups, and neighbourhood groups.

Of course, we should not ignore the unique individual in the classroom. But the mechanism of disadvantage I have tried to indicate so far, relies upon social groups and upon differences between those groups in customary ways of thinking about and responding to everyday circumstances of living. The importance of basic social groups is that membership of them exercises precisely that formative influence which provides the individual with his sense of self and of cultural identity; the very factors which, when mediated by such substantially innate qualities as temperament, intelligence and so forth, produce the unique individual. The person that one is, is fashioned by corporate social induction rather than born.

Let us look a little closer at the beginnings of this person-making development. Long before the young child reaches the age when he becomes capable of reflective thought, he is introduced to norms of behaviour concerning relations with others. To be good is to conform to them. Before he is capable of operative choice between competing values he is provided with authority backed information and subjected to attitude forming influences concerning what it is right to do, what is desirable (worth desiring), what is the proper and decent thing. To be sure he receives all this principally from his parents. But the parents have been subject to the same influences. They gained their identities or personhood by the same kind of experience. Remember that any group is a conservative agency. It seeks to perpetuate the things it holds to be of value. The customary way of doing a thing *is* the customary way of doing a thing *because* it is held to be the best or most fitting. This applies whether we are talking of bathing the baby, improving the mind, or burying the dead. When the larger society denigrates the values, beliefs and customs of a basic social group by granting minimal valuation to that which it values highly, the mechanism of disadvantage begins to operate. It operates upon the individual as a member of a denigrated group.

This analysis is compatible with the arguments of T. S. Eliot and his disciple, G. H. Bantock. They contend that the irreducible educative unit is the family, not the single individual. I agree. But I differ from Bantock when he insists that any attempt to equalize in education must therefore be abandoned. He argues that equality of schooling opportunity in culturally diverse contexts can only damage the best in society. It hinders the intellectual advancement of the most able. Hence the benefits they can offer by virtue of social advantage are wasted. I deny that access to the best that has been thought, done, and said, must necessarily be restricted if it is not to be watered down, distorted, and eventually corrupted into mediocrity. Again I talk of groups rather than individuals. I do not think that his membership of a disadvantaged group should lead us to cocoon the individual within the shelter of the classroom in order to comfort, warm and protect him from the rigorous, difficult and unfamiliar. I will return to this point later.

I would now like to restate the position I have outlined under three points.

1. We can understand and interpret the behaviour of individuals only when we know the nature of the formative social influences that have shaped their attitudes and value systems.

   Therefore

   When we reject those influences as in some way defective or substandard our strategy for advantaging the individual must be to make that person an escapee from the group. But if we succeed we damage the group. Not that success is at all certain.

2. The unit of irreducible educational significance is not the isolated learner but the family of which he is part.

   Therefore

   When we isolate the school from the family we atrophy the role and the effectiveness of the teacher in respect of the individual. This is one reason why success is hard to achieve.

   And

3. In not advantaging the family we probably fail with the individual. We cannot interpret and understand the family unless we know the nature of the fundamental social group from which it obtains its groundplan for living.

Therefore

> To advantage the disadvantaged we must work in terms of the community not against or in ignorance of its values and customary ways.

It now becomes plain that merely to employ ameliorative or compensatory measures to the individual is to make the mistake of confusing the symptoms of a problem for the problem itself. We deal in pseudo-problems and in explanations which are either misleading, false or both.

I contend that educational disadvantage considered in isolation is just such a pseudo-problem. Notice here that we are *not* discussing the limits of potential. Where those limits are unalterably well below the potential of the average individual we will talk of handicap rather than disadvantage. But we are considering here the tragedies of unrecognized ability, depressed possibilities, unrealized attainment. We are discussing the vitiated actuality which mocks what could be. How do we explain this gap between what is and what could be? Trapped in the pseudo-problem we will talk of lack of language and language skills, of undeveloped comprehension, of lack of motivation. We will make correlations between these misfortunes and *migrant backgrounds*—no English spoken at home; *low socio-economic status—bad* English is spoken at home; *parent apathy*—no one bothers to talk or read to the child in any language.

In great measure I reject all this. The real problem is one of social pathology. Educational under-achievement is merely an indication. Look at it in terms of social process rather than end results. Under achievement carried into adulthood limits understanding, confirms the individual (*and* the community group of which he is relatively typical) in a state of powerlessness; constricts life options. It convinces individual and group alike that the institutional bureaucracies (one of which is the school) are mysterious and remote agencies. The effect of all this reduces conviction and motivation, resulting in that by now familiar phenomenon, the low self-image. The school which contributes to this condition is, in my view, itself a disadvantaging influence. I hasten to add that my observation is more to do with the schooling system than with the intentions and dedication of individual teachers. I shall say more on this later.

The point can be illustrated by reference to the work done by some of the teacher teams who have worked in the La Trobe Educational Task Force and Area Study Team projects over the last six or seven years. One example is described by Roger Holdsworth in his chapter in *The Urban School*. The team used the notion of cultural consonance and dissonance as a means of assessing the degree to which the school was succeeding in aligning itself with the community it purported to serve. (The school is also described in the same book as well as in our *La Trobe Task Force Occasional Paper No. 1*.) After a careful investigation, the team identified a range of issues considered to be of great importance both to the home and school by parents, students and teachers alike. It then ascertained the agreements and disagreements to be found between those three groups within this range of issues. Consonance was marked by agreement. Dissonance was marked by the degree of conflict between opinions.

A disruptive and destructive situation arises when teachers and pupils tend to exhibit consonance with each other but have a common dissonance (disagreement) with the opinions of parents. The student is now in a cultural no-man's-land between home and school. The teacher is ranged against the parent. The parent feels it necessary to protect his cultural identity against the school. By virtue of the way such identities come to be formed it now follows that the school belongs to the community only in the sense of being physically in the neighbourhood. At the very worst it stands silent at all times beyond school hours, empty of those visitors called teachers who regularly trek from other districts to do what Eric Midwinter so trenchantly opposes in his books on educational priority areas in Britain, namely to convert children into escapees from all that they have so far known.

We can now construct a profile of a disadvantaging school such as some Task Force/Area Study teams have sought to transform.

A.

Seventy per cent of the students of the school have a different cultural and/or ethnic origin from the dominant culture.

In many cases the language of the home is not English nor can English be readily understood there.

YET

For many years the only language heard in the school classrooms was precisely the language never or rarely heard in the home. The language of the classroom was also not the one natural for the playground. (In one case where this was so we also found a macabre *prohibition* against the speaking of home languages—i.e. Greek, Italian, Turkish—while within the school gates was issued. To facilitate observance, parents were debarred access to the playgrounds!)

B.

Over the same period the school staged annual meetings of parents to herald each new year of schooling. At these meetings the rules and procedures of the school were explained and all necessary guidance given that any parent could require in order to conform to school regulations.

BUT

The written invitations sent to the homes were in English. The meeting itself was conducted entirely in English. No attempt was made to elicit parents' opinion as to what *they* thought was desirable for the children.

NEVERTHELESS

Every year the staff lamented the tiny attendance at this orientation evening.

They saw it as clear "proof" that their teaching task was enormously hindered because the children they taught came from deprived homes.

C.

Truancy over this period was a way of life among the students. Again many staff castigated "environmental influences". Some—by no means all—invoked what Midwinter once called that "item of educational demonology, the feckless, apathetic, working class parent". Parents, it was said, spurned the advantages education offered their children and allowed them to run wild in the streets, prey to every urban danger and to the ruin of their chances for the future.

BUT

Later surveys by one of the Task Force teams indicated that the allegedly truanting students were as likely to be responding to family needs as anything else. They helped out when parents worked in the family shop or slept after the night shift while the other partner was away on day shift in the factory.

Few teachers knew of the high incidence of night work and the pressing necessity for both parents to work. Few teachers were aware that the area was all but barren of kindergartens and nurseries.

Once more I stress that this is not to blame the teachers. Instead it is to reveal the inadequacy of their preparation for work with disadvantaged groups. Programs of teacher education still frequently concentrate solely upon individuals and the doctrine of individual differences at the expense of attention to social, economic and cultural influences which are formative of the individual. Far too little time is devoted to the acquisition of skills in utilizing community, family and peer group influences to educative effect. Efficiency in teaching is still assessed entirely within the classroom.

D.

Premature school leaving was the rule in the school.

As soon as possible—and that was sometimes sooner than what was legally prescribed—kids trekked across the road, journeying from rows of desks to the lines of machines in the factory almost immediately opposite the school.

Today—as distinct from that time of several years back—the exodus is likely to be sadder still. Now it is from school to structural unemployment and chronic lack of function.[†]

YET

Many of those student refugees were perfectly capable of other [illegible] more rewarding occupational destinations than unskilled work.

BUT

The parents knew too little of career options.

[†] We can hardly educate *for* unemployment but it is sheer myopia to imagine that all who "deserve" work will get it on leaving school. What, then, is it to educate people to withstand unemployment?

They understood too little about the credentialling opportunities the schools can afford.

The students had become convinced that they were unsuited and not capable of doing any more.

So there is the end of the disadvantaging trail, through the disadvantaging school.

The road leads to the realm of limited options.

It is reached early in life.

The real problem, then, is social pathology. When it is allowed to control the schooling process we can talk of the disadvantaging school. We can schematize the process as follows:

SOCIAL INCOMPREHENSION
producing
PARENT POWERLESSNESS
IN A
CRIPPLED COMMUNITY
plus
IGNORANCE ON THE PART
OF THE SCHOOL

leading
— to —

STAFF DEPRESSION

STUDENT DISAFFECTION

resulting in

LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
DEPRESSED EXPECTATIONS AND
ASPIRATIONS

To transform the disadvantaging school into a truly educative and beneficial institution I suggest that achievement in terms of the dominant culture must be built upon gains secured in and for the culture of the minority group concerned. This attacks the pathological factors on the left-hand side of the diagram. Advance should not be bought at the expense of that culture or even in disregard of it. For example, as Marta Rado argues in her work on bilingual education, we should not neglect or denigrate the first language of the child in our anxiety to bring about learning gains in English. Not only is it not the most likely way to secure such gains; it is socially unethical.

In making these points I find myself in agreement with Jonathan Kozol in his book "Free Schools". I am also in agreement with a comment by Peter Goldstone in a review of that book published in *Studies in Philosophy and Education; Reviews and Rejoinders, Vol. IX, Nos. 1 and 2*. Goldstone distinguishes a *liberationist* from a *libertarian* school. As in Kozol's own, the *liberationist* school aims to free the student from disadvantage by insisting upon hard skills while working in closely with the community. Kozol sees this as common sense. In his work with underprivileged communities—note that I particularly avoid narrowing the context to children alone—his aim is to foster competence and persistence. That is not achieved by allowing people to do their own thing in their own way, avoiding all things tedious and difficult of attainment. That kind of luxury Kozol argues, is not the way to combat disadvantage.

The following measures are, I suggest, ones which can reasonably be expected to assist to transform the disadvantaged school.‡ They are taken from accounts of research and development undertaken by the La Trobe projects I have mentioned earlier. Hence I report upon the work and refer to the writings of practising and experienced teachers. I emphasize that I do not offer you a definitive model or a magic formula. These things can help.

Extensive and Continuing Interaction and Consultation with Parents

Pointless and incessant visits to homes and any sort of paternalistic missionary activity in the neighbourhood are *not* referred to by this.

There must be purpose in what is done and mutual consent to it. There must be genuine commitment to the affairs and interests of the community. At the National Conference for Disadvantaged Schools held at La Trobe University in August, Stenhouse made much of teacher neutrality. I understand and sympathize with his intention to persuade teachers that it is better to allow students to debate an issue themselves than have their mistakes eternally and oppressively pointed out. But I do not for a moment think that this consideration can be permitted to turn the teacher into some sort of intellectual eunuch. The issues that students must be brought to deal with should be real. They should be concerned with the twin questions of what ought to be done (i.e. what is just and fair) and how it can be accomplished. We deal therefore in issues about which it is not sensible to be neutral. If the teacher is not prepared to stand with the disadvantaged he should not be working in disadvantaged areas. Mere "do gooder" gratifications, obtained by treating the disadvantaged as subordinate though worthy, do more harm than good.

Survey of Parental Aspirations, Expectations, and Attitudes to Questions of Educational Significance

Once more these surveys can do positive damage if they constitute nothing more important than the sort of cultural tourism which is frequently disguised as social science investigation. They have real value only when they are seen to be thoroughgoing efforts to gain knowledge upon which to *act* in terms of the school's programs and procedures, in order to avoid denigrating the cultural life of the pluralist community the school should seek to serve and enrich.

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‡What follows is derived from *Curriculum and Culture: Schooling in a Pluralist Society.* Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1977. (Chapter 3.) In Chapter 5 of the same book Tony Knight makes some further suggestions, including that of Cross-age and Peer group tutoring, which we have found to be very helpful.

Creation of Open Membership Parent Councils

It is very much a matter of debate as to how often such councils should meet and what their function should be. We would argue that they should meet regularly and have the power to send delegates to the major decision-making bodies of the school. The vital thing is to create for parent groups an organisational channel by use of which they may easily and effectively represent their interests. It should exist in advance of—as distinct from anticipation of—any crisis or apparent threat to those interests arising in the school.

Establishment of an Instrument of Information Dissemination with a Wide Circulation Among Parents

In one school a team of teachers produced a trilingual newspaper on educational issues. It was professionally printed and distributed throughout the district. Later on three more schools associated themselves with the newspaper, sharing the costs and the editorial responsibilities.

In a culturally pluralist situation a publication in other languages as well as English does much to free its originators from a reputation of being blinkered keepers of a rigid status quo. Simply to *see* "Il resultado di questa inchiesta e stato . . ." may convince a family of Italian origin that barriers have been taken down and that respect is not confined to those who obey a single cultural fiat.

Institution of "Work In" and "Work Out" Programs in the School

These should provide experimental evidence for students and parents alike that cultural differences do not destine people to particular rankings in the workforce by any law of genetic or ethnic inferiority.

In order to operate such schemes effectively it is obvious that a close contact between the school and the locality's commercial and industrial community must be established. Accomplishing this provides great scope for mutual learning to occur and for further joint initiatives to be devised involving teachers and leaders of local commerce and industry. The insights teachers can gain from this, and those they can themselves impart concerning their pupils, should substantially enrich school-community interaction.

I do not think that every person is suited to the sort of school envisaged on this paper. I am against indiscriminate drafting of teachers on these grounds, among many others. I do not think that every person who wants to work in such a school is necessarily fitted to do so simply because he or she feels suited to the work. By the same token, it may well be that not all university or college staff are equipped to work in and with inner city and Western suburban schools. These issues cannot be fully explored here, but I believe them to be appropriate matter for a conjoint examination by school and tertiary institution.

It is essential to look very carefully at the requirements placed upon teachers by the sort of commitment I have suggested. At the moment, there is no doubt that it demands a disproportionate degree of supererogatory endeavour from them. Home contacts and parent councils, all kinds of new techniques and skills outside the parameter of the traditional teacher role are being employed. They indicate the emergence of new institutional processes.

At present all this must be timed beyond the boundaries of the formal teaching day. It makes no sense. The practice merely buttresses an attitude dichotomising theory and practice, and separating school from community, which is as outdated and dysfunctional as the nineteenth century instructional compound. The work of the Task Force teams clearly demonstrates the need to dispel the notion that the teacher's role can be worked out exclusively to a base of contact hours in front of classes plus allowance for preparation and some little time for administration. Similarly, it provides cause for a changed attitude to study leave. Leave should not be thought of as some sort of prize for good behaviour awarded to individuals. The schools need staff who have had time to study and do field work. We have a long way yet to go before we have schools suitable for advantaging the underprivileged. In my view the task can only be accomplished by teachers possessed of vision, competence and a hardheaded commitment to the value of cultural diversity. These things are hard to come by. But they are the basis for sound practical prescriptions.

The task they face can be summarized as follows:

The real problem AND *Its explanation*

SOCIAL PATHOLOGY
Social incomprehension
Powerless individuals
Crippled communities
Low motivation
Limited life options \

Failure to educate in the context
of
/ Pluralist society

THE NECESSARY
RESPONSE
|
A Strategy for adjusting the basic
social institution of the school

(a) School: growth point for community
  — extended teacher role
  — new school functions
  — new teacher specialisms

(b) Empowering people who happen to be parents
  — school as a training ground
  in participant democracy
  engendering competence, a sense
  of belonging and usefulness

(c) Communication processes consonant with social environment
    — school an agent for social reconstruction.

As I have said the task is not easy, not for the romantic or the faint-hearted, and not for the uninformed.

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QUALITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THE DISADVANTAGED

J. Brown

I am delighted to be asked to speak about quality *and* parent participation.

When the two are looked at, as they often still are, as separate aims the second may be put aside as too difficult for the moment. I would, of course, see the first as dependent on the second in any school program but if we extend parent participation to school/community interaction then in "disadvantaged schools" we cannot have quality without the other.

You've heard the excuses as often as I and they come from parent organisations as often as from schools and teachers.

"We invited them and they didn't come."

"You never see the parents you need to see."

"We keep them informed, we have regular newsletters."

As well as these sorts of comments we have to face the fact that simply saying something often doesn't mean it has been accepted, even in principle, or worse, that saying it often enough may convince people that something is happening when in reality there is no change.

In some ways the context in which we will work in 1979 may be even more difficult. Right now, in some states, teachers are feeling threatened by public comment on the "failures of schools". As we're coming to grips with ways to improve, many of us are feeling the need to defend.

This makes our task even more difficult.

Until recent years Australians have not thought of schools as contributing to goals of social equality or of having a role in the wider community. We have allowed ourselves to believe that by providing a "free, compulsory and secular" system of education "open to all" we have taken care of the notion of equality. We've applied staffing formulas and equal shares of resources and provided differentials to care for the academically gifted and the intellectually and physically handicapped.

It was the Disadvantaged Schools Program which challenged those who believed that that was what equality of educational opportunity was all about, but even more uncomfortable was its challenge to those who believed it was not to do something about it.

The Karmel Report saw one of the objectives of the Program as "opening up the school", it recognised that the essential element of the Program was that schooling must be relevant to the needs of all participants. Subsequent Schools Commission reports elaborated further on the need for the involvement of the whole school community in the setting of goals and the development of programs.

Lawrence Cremin, of Columbia University, formulates a theory of education in *The Family as Educator*.[1]

> "It defines education as the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities (and the results of that effort) — thereby

> assuming a certain overlap with concepts such as socialization, enculturation, and development but insisting at the same time that the several concepts are not synonymous. It acknowledges that education generally proceeds via many individuals and institutions — parents, peers, siblings and friends as well as families, churches, libraries, museums, summer camps, schools and colleges. It assumes, too, that the various educators in a community often relate to one another in configurations, though it cautions that such relationships may be dissonant as well as consonant, contradictory as well as complimentary . . . And it assumes finally that individuals come to educational situations with their own temperaments, histories, and purposes, that different individuals will interact with any given educational institution or configuration in different ways and with different outcomes, and that considering the interactions and the outcomes it is as necessary to examine the lives of those undergoing education as it is to examine the efforts of the educators."

The 1973 Research Report of the N.S.W. study *In Loco Parentis*[2] provided evidence of the inability of schools alone to resolve the dissonant and contradictory elements between school and home/community.

While many professional educators and parents are still equivocating about the role of parents in schools and community use of school facilities others, in schools serving our poorest communities, are finding ways to make those schools better for children.

In the past we tried to convince by intellectual argument and overseas research, now we are building a body of local action research with practical examples (e.g. N.S.W. Quality Proposals Project).[3] We're beginning to see the effects on teacher morale and parental attitudes.

It was too much to expect that the involvement of parents in other than traditional ways would be easy but many of us underestimated the problems.

It seems to me that there are three major hurdles, not exclusive to this program but perhaps more immediate than to schools in general.

- An acceptance and understanding of the fact that parent involvement is essential.
- The inability to look beyond the traditional kinds of parent involvement.
- Support.

If we are not able to see beyond traditional kinds of parent involvement then it's easy to argue that it is not essential to the development of relevant curricula.

Traditionally we've counted physical involvement, in parent organisations, school canteens, working bees and the unending variety of fund-raising activities, these roles now extend to parents of advisory and even decision-making committees — important but still not basically different — still part of the "bringing them in" approach.

Teachers and parents who have been part of finding new ways towards school/community interaction are perhaps the best people to promote wider acceptance and understanding of the proposition that such interaction and involvement is essential.

A course in Sydney last year brought together teachers and parents from disadvantaged schools with the aim of providing strategies for the development of positive programs to encourage community involvement and participation.[4]

Over a six week period participants in the course were directly involved with their appointed school and its community through work experience and field study. At the end of the course they prepared a School Profile, a Community Profile and an assessment of the receptiveness of the school to school/community interaction and community to community/school interaction.

Six months later reports from the participants were more than encouraging in terms of action in their own schools or their part in dissemination of ideas in their regions.

So we're beginning to refine our ideas into strategies, but the implementation requires support.

Systems support for teachers facing difficult and time consuming tasks considered inadequately or not at all in their basic training, and support for parents whether through systems or parent organisations or by other parents.

There isn't time here to go into the different types of support needed,

— initially the encouragement for parents to overcome their feelings of inadequacy and isolation from the schooling part of education

— support which guards against excluding the majority of parents as a minority becomes more involved

— support for parents and teachers to "learn as they go".

These are only a few of the reasons why not only those directly involved with the Disadvantaged Schools Program must be prepared to commit resources to encourage and assist schools and their communities in their search for better ways to meet the needs of their students.

The concluding statement in 1973 *In Loco Parentis* referring to the importance of parental involvement said

> "Even the will to take on such a complex task would bring professional educators into confrontation with some of the social realities around them that in their present aloofness they studiously avoid."

I hope the difference between 1973 and 1978 is as great as I believe it is.

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HOME BACKGROUND AND THE OUTCOMES OF SCHOOLING

J. P. KEEVES

On 10 December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed a universal declaration of human rights. Article 26, clause 1 of that declaration stated

> Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least at the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

From this declaration, equality of educational opportunity became acknowledged as a basic principle in providing for education not only among the western democracies but across the world. Nevertheless, there was also recognition in the declaration that men differ in their abilities, interests and aptitudes and that educational opportunities should be made available at the higher levels "on the basis of merit".

Almost since the advent of intelligence testing it has been recognized that differences exist between scores obtained on intelligence tests and social status, environmental factors and cultural background. It has been pointed out that persons of higher intelligence tend to be concentrated within higher socio-economic status levels. In addition, it has been established that intelligence develops during the years from early childhood to late adolescence and that its development is influenced in part by the environment. However, it has also been argued that intelligence tests contain a disproportionate amount of material drawn from the cultural experiences of the child from higher status backgrounds. Nevertheless it is often claimed that the observed differences in student IQ's are artifacts of the content of the test items and do not necessarily reflect accurately underlying ability. If opportunities for education beyond the elementary level are to be made available on the basis of merit, and if merit is assessed by performance on tests of intelligence then equality of access to such education might not exist for individuals drawn from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The traditional approach to social and cultural deprivation argues that parental status influences the level of intellectual stimulation provided by the home environment which in turn influences the level of ability of the child. However, it must be recognized that the intellectual abilities of both the father and mother of the child not only influence the level of socio-economic status which they attain and the quality of the environment they provide, but also the genetic endowment which they pass on to their children. Thus children from lower status homes are not only disadvantaged through a lower level of environmental stimulation, but are doubly disadvantaged through a lower level of genetic endowment received from their parents. Over the past 50 years a great deal of intellectual and emotional effort has gone into attempts to tease out the relative contributions of heredity and environment to intellectual development. More recently both statisticians and psychologists have questioned whether such relationships can be effectively untangled because it is doubted whether both genetic and environmental factors operate in an additive way (Husén, 1963; Moran, 1973).

More recently Williams (1976) has argued that children who come from higher status homes where there is a higher level of environmental stimulation are not only doubly advantaged by their genetic inheritance, but are further advantaged by their greater capability to influence the environment in which they live to affect their own cognitive gain. They have greater control over the environments to which they are exposed and they select from these environments experiences which will foster their greater intellectual development. In an ingenious way Williams was able to estimate the magnitude of this third advantage, to the extent that he was able to show that such an effect was unlikely to be trivial. Further analysis of data collected within the city of Canberra, confirms these estimates, and indicates that simplistic approaches to issues of partitioning hereditary and environmental effects are likely to be seriously misleading. It is consequently suggested that attempts to understand the nature of educational disadvantage must take into account the extent to which individuals from culturally deprived backgrounds are unable to control their environments to promote their greater cognitive development. It is recognition of this aspect of educational disadvantage that demands that we reject traditional policies for provision of greater equality of educational opportunity and seek to develop alternative strategies.

Before doing so it is important that we should examine the data available to determine the extent to which equality of educational opportunity exists not only within Australia, but also within other nations that are signatories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Equity and equality of opportunity are abstract concepts that are difficult to examine directly in empirical terms, and as a consequence it is necessary to investigate relationships between social and cultural background factors and important educational outcomes to assess the extent to which equality of opportunity and equity prevail. The examination of comparative evidence is undertaken to illuminate the relationships existing within Australia, and to indicate whether further progress towards a goal of greater equality can be considered feasible.

An Examination of Social Background and Educational Outcomes

Sources of Data

The evidence considered in this examination of relationships between social background and educational outcomes has been derived from that collected in the Six Subject Study which the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted in 1970. In particular this paper examines evidence collected in the IEA Science Project from 19 countries which participated in the study at the 14-year-old or terminal secondary school levels. For further details of this investigation the report by Comber and Keeves (1973) should be consulted.

Not all countries took part in the study at both levels, and where data are not reported, the country was not involved at that level. This investigation was a prodigious undertaking. In the Science study, the same tests were administered to strictly comparable probability samples in the 19 countries, four of which were less developed, and 14 different languages were involved. In all it was necessary to contact 9,700 schools, some 50,000 teachers and 258,000 students. To undertake a study of this kind required a great reserve of trust and goodwill and a huge network of voluntary helpers. Moreover, it is important to note that the investigation was not carried out by governmental decree but by mutual agreement between the national educational research centres engaged in the enterprise. The investigation reflected the spirit that has been created through the twenty and more years of activity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in fostering the collection and exchange of statistical information on education between different nations. If irregularities and inconsistencies exist in the data gathered and analysed, they arise not from deliberate distortion but from the complexity of carrying out a study of this magnitude.

Measures of Home Background

Two types of measures of home background were employed in the investigation, namely measures concerned with occupational status and measures related to the socio-cultural level of the home.

Occupational Status. Each country was asked to examine thoroughly the International Labour Organization (ILO) scheme of occupational classification and to define a set of occupational categories, preferably one that had been used within the country to form a scale for educational and sociological studies. In Australia, the classification and scale developed by Broom, Jones and Zubrzycki (1965, 1968) were employed. Two difficulties were encountered across the 19 nations. First, in some countries there were substantial proportions of unclassifiable or missing responses obtained from the students in reply to a question in a student questionnaire. Secondly, it was found that in some countries a validated occupational scale was not available and a somewhat arbitrary classification of occupations had been employed. In presenting results across the 19 nations it has been possible to group occupations of fathers under four headings:

Professional, sub-professional, technical and managerial;
clerical and sales;
skilled; and
semi-skilled and unskilled.

It is evident that by and large, this classification reflects an occupational hierarchy, assessed in terms of prestige and skill, but clearly difficulties arise in the placement of workers in different levels of rural occupations. Nevertheless it is likely that such a classification, developed largely to serve the purposes of the western industrialized nations may be grossly inadequate for use in the developing countries.

Socio-Cultural Level of the Home. Information was collected from the students taking part in the study on a large number of measures of home environment and practices. After a detailed examination of relationships with criterion measures six variables were selected which were intercorrelated one with another and which were clearly indices of the socio-cultural level of the home. The six variables selected were:

(a) Father's occupation (discussed above),
(b) Father's education,
(c) Mother's education,
(d) Use of a dictionary,
(e) Number of books in the home, and
(f) Family size.

These six variables were weighted by criterion scaling procedures (Beaton, 1969) to form a composite measure assessing the socio-cultural level of the home. Since this index is a compound measure, it is not possible to report in terms of identified categories and therefore correlations with educational outcomes must necessarily be employed.

Measures of Educational Outcome

Two measures of educational outcome are commonly employed, namely attainment and achievement. While there is sometimes confusion in the use of these terms, in general, attainment refers to the level of schooling reached or the number of years or grades of education completed and achievement refers to level of performance on measures of educational learning.

Attainment. In using number of years of education completed as a measure of attainment, it is possible to examine relationships between grade level at age 14 years and the socio-cultural level of the house, or to examine the different proportions of students from the four broad occupational categories who continue beyond the age of compulsory schooling to the terminal secondary school stage.

Achievement. Two measures of achievement were available in this study to indicate level of performance in school learning. The first was a measure of achievement on a test of Science and the second a measure of verbal ability obtained using a 40 item Word Knowledge Test. For further details on the construction of these tests Comber and Keeves (1973) and Thorndike (1973) should be consulted.

Occupational Status and Educational Outcomes

Attainment and Occupational Status. The evidence collected in the study that was available for the calculation and interpretation of an index of discrimination assessing the relationship between attainment and occupational status has been recorded in Table 1. The Table also records information on the percentage of an age group remaining at school to age 14 and to the terminal secondary school grade. For a majority of countries a minimum age below which a student is not permitted to leave school of 15 years is enforced.

TABLE 1

Relationships between Attainment and Father's Occupation

1970	Australia	Belgium (Flemish)	Belgium (French)	Chile	England	West Germany	Finland	France[c]	Hungary	India	Iran	Italy	Japan[d]	Netherlands	New Zealand	Scotland	Sweden	Thailand	United States
Percentage of Age Group at School																			
14-Year-Old	99	90		71	99	94	99	99	83	25	25	55	99	98	99	99	99	<80	99
Terminal Grade	29	47		16	20	9[a]	21	29	28	14	9	16	70	13	13[b]	17[b]	45	10	75
Father's Occupation (14-Year-Old Level) %																			
Professional and Managerial	37	11	41	8	14	14	10		20	10	20	7	17	20	27	24	26	3	31
Clerical, Sales	11	68	11	21	13	32	52		13	22	20	44	19	59	28	13	6	33	10
Skilled	17		30	27	51	38			27	52	44	23	34		13	34	33	46	27
Semi and Unskilled	31	13	6	28	14	8	34		36	3	6	21	29	12	27	25	27	8	16
Unclassified	4	7	12	16	9	8	5		4	13	11	5	2	10	6	5	9	9	16
Father's Occupation (Terminal-Secondary School Level) %																			
Professional and Managerial	59	21	62	19	38	49	20	37	38	16	24	10		55	48	56	35	9	34
Clerical, Sales	14	62	5	34	18	38	58	14	21	27	19	55		30	29	18	6	34	9
Skilled	11		19	17	31	7		34	20	43	42	15			7	17	25	53	27
Semi and Unskilled	14	10	5	8	5	1	15	7	18	5	8	14		5	10	6	15	3	14
Unclassified	3	7	10	21	8	6	7	9	3	9	7	7		10	6	3	20	2	16
Index of Discrimination	3.5	2.5	1.8	8.3	7.6	28.0	4.5	—	3.8	1.0	0.9	2.1	—	6.6	4.8	9.7	2.4	8.0	1.3

[a] This figure is for gymnasia only. Many students are in other schools, such as Higher Technical Schools.

[b] This figure is for the terminal grade, it is possible to enter universities from the previous grade.

[c] France did not test at the 14-year-old level.

[d] Japan did not test at the terminal secondary school level.

However, in Belgium, Chile, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy and Thailand a substantial proportion (10 per cent or more) are not in school at the age of 14 years. Thus in these countries some selection takes place before 14 years and some bias with respect to occupational status background is present in the school population at this age level.

Table 1 also records the proportions of the samples at the 14-year-old and terminal secondary school levels, who were found to be in the four occupational categories. The differences across countries in the percentages in the four categories, reflect in part the different occupational structures in the countries, as well as differences in the underlying classificatory systems used. However, since the same classification scheme was used at each level within a country it is legitimate to calculate an index of discrimination to measure the degree of social selectivity that has taken place between the 14-year-old age level and the terminal secondary school stage.

In the calculation of this index the ratio of the percentage of students in the professional and managerial category to the percentage of students in the semi-skilled and unskilled category at the terminal secondary school stage, divided by the ratio of the percentage of students in the professional and managerial category to the percentage of students in the semi-skilled and unskilled category at the 14-year-old level has been used. It should be noted that with the exception of Chile, Hungary and Thailand the index is low in those countries where some selectivity operates prior to the age of 14 years. However, the index is also low in Sweden and the United States, where relatively little social class discrimination in staying on at school operates prior to the terminal secondary school stage. The index is large in Germany, Scotland, England and the Netherlands and is only moderate in Australia.

Achievement and Occupational Status. In Table 2 the mean scores of the students at the 14-year-old level on the Science Test and the Word Knowledge Test for each of the four occupational status categories have been recorded. It should be noted that Japan and Thailand did not administer the Word Knowledge Test to their students at this level, and that data were not available for five nations. However, the evidence recorded in Table 2 for the 14-year-old students in this study shows a remarkably consistent relationship between membership of a higher occupational status group and a higher level of performance in the Science and Word Knowledge Tests. Notable exceptions are: in Hungary and Thailand where the performance of the skilled worker group exceeds by a small margin that of the clerical and sales workers; in New Zealand where a relatively large group of farmers, classified in the professional and managerial category lowers the level of performance of the students in this category on the Word Knowledge but not the Science Test; and in Chile where the skilled worker group performs below the semi-skilled and unskilled worker group on the Science Test. However these exceptions are small in magnitude and occur in the main where some attrition has already taken place probably through students from lower status homes leaving school prior to the age of 14 years.

TABLE 2

Relationships between Occupational Status and Achievement at 14-Year-Old Level

1970	Australia	Chile	England	Finland	F.R.G.	Hungary	Japan[a]	Netherlands	New Zealand	Scotland	Sweden	Thailand[a]	United States
Achievement on Science Test													
Professional and Managerial	28.6	15.8	29.3	26.2	27.5	34.6	37.9	22.8	27.3	30.5	24.9	17.6	26.1
Clerical, Sales	25.6	9.9	24.0	20.8	25.7	27.8	33.3	18.3	25.0	24.4	21.8	15.4	22.2
Skilled	24.5	7.9	20.1		22.6	28.9	29.3		24.1	18.8	21.9	16.6	20.1
Semi and Unskilled	21.8	9.0	16.2	18.2	22.0	26.4	28.7	18.7	21.4	17.0	18.6	14.9	19.1
Country Mean	24.6	9.2	21.3	20.5	23.7	29.1	31.2	19.8	24.2	21.4	21.7	15.6	21.6
Achievement on Word Knowledge Test													
Professional and Managerial	18.1	20.7	21.8	20.1	23.1	32.1	—	23.3	18.0	21.9	16.3	—	20.4
Clerical, Sales	17.3	16.2	17.3	17.2	18.9	27.7	—	18.8	18.3	17.5	13.9	—	18.1
Skilled	15.4	11.8	14.4		14.2	28.7	—		16.0	14.3	13.2	—	15.9
Semi and Unskilled	14.0	11.3	11.3	14.9	14.6	26.3	—	17.7	14.7	13.2	11.8	—	14.6
Country Mean	16.1	13.3	15.4	16.8	15.9	28.3	—	18.7	16.8	15.9	13.6	—	16.8
N	5307	1355	3284	2326	2243	7039	1945	1254	1995	2011	2490	1927	7065

[a] Japan and Thailand did not take the Word Knowledge Tests.

The evidence from this investigation indicates very convincingly the universal applicability of a relationship between the occupational status level of the home background of a student prior to the minimum school leaving age and performance on achievement tests in Science and Word Knowledge. Moreover, it should be noted that students from homes in Japan where the father is a semi-skilled or unskilled worker perform at a marginally higher level than students in Australia from professional and managerial homes while students in Australia from homes where the father is a semi-skilled or unskilled worker are markedly superior in performance in Science compared to a student from a professional or managerial home in a developing country such as Chile or Thailand. It would appear that between countries there are marked cultural differences influencing the average level of achievement at school, and within countries there are also socio-cultural differences that are related to marked differences in achievement between students in different occupational status groups.

The Correlation between Occupational Status and Outcomes. Following an examination of the mean scores for the defined occupational status groups in Science and Word Knowledge, a criterion scaled variable was formed to assess the status backgrounds of the homes of the students tested. At the terminal secondary school level, where a substantial proportion of students had left school, the variable used at the 14-year-old level was employed, and for those countries where some loss of students had already occurred by the 14-year-old level, the achievement test scores of students at the 10-year-old level were used in the construction of the occupational status variable.

In Table 3 the correlations between occupational status and the measures of achievement in Science and Word Knowledge and of attitude towards School and School Learning, together with the grade attained by the students in the sample at age 14 years have been recorded at the 14-year-old level. Since in general, all students at the terminal secondary school level came from the same grade, only the correlations of occupational status with achievement in Science and Word Knowledge and attitudes towards School and School Learning have been recorded.

At the 14-year-old level with few exceptions the correlations between occupational status and educational outcomes are positive giving very convincing evidence for the fact that, in general, children from higher status homes perform better at school, hold more favourable attitudes to school and school learning and are working in higher grades. The strongest correlations between occupational status and achievement occur in Britain and the United States. It should, however, be recalled that in many countries some degree of attrition from schooling has taken place by the age of 14 years. Australia records correlations close to the mean for the 16 countries included in the analyses.

At the terminal secondary school level, similar relationships are shown in Table 3 between occupational status and the two measures of achievement, although the correlations are weaker than at the 14-year-old level. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the largest correlations recorded are for the United States, where there is the highest degree of retentivity at the terminal

TABLE 3

Correlations[a] between Occupational Status and Educational Outcomes

1970	Australia	Belgium (Flemish)	Belgium (French)	Chile	England	F.R.G.	Finland	France	Hungary	India	Iran	Italy	Japan	Netherlands	New Zealand	Scotland	Sweden	United States	Mean	Sign of Correlation Coefficient	
																				+	–
14-Year-Old Level																					
Science	24	12	—	–04	34	19	24	—	24	13	17	10	24	25	20	39	23	31	20	15	1
Word Knowledge	22	18	—	26	38	33	21	—	21	09	12	21	—	28	24	37	22	30	24	15	0
Like School	09	04	—	–10	15	06	11	—	05	09	–05	05	21	05	09	16	18	07	08	14	2
Grade	11	–02	—	43	02	03	03	—	13	15	03	05	—	12	14	03	05	08	09	14	1
N	5252	699	—	1327	3280	2147	2326	—	7026	2905	1436	7252	1946	1214	1994	2012	2469	2865			
Terminal Secondary School Level																					
Science	06	06	12	20	06	–02	12	07	18	09	–01	06	—	09	06	09	08	21	09	15	2
Word Knowledge	09	15	11	18	09	07	–02	12	09	05	08	14	—	06	10	09	08	24	10	16	1
Like School	—	–03	01	–17	–05	–03	02	—	–02	13	–06	–07	—	03	01	–09	06	—	–2	6	8
N	4201	449	1082	2095	2308	1962	1784	3447	2865	3121	1085	5025	—	1134	1718	1345	3416	2161			

[a] Correlation coefficients have been recorded with decimal points omitted.

TABLE 4

Correlations[a] between Home Background Variables and Achievement in Science

1970	Australia	Belgium (Flemish)	Chile	England	F.R.G.	Finland	France	Hungary	India	Iran	Italy	Japan	Netherlands	New Zealand	Scotland	Sweden	Thailand	United States	Mean	Sign of Correlation Coefficient +	−
14-Year-Old Level																					
Father's Occupation	24	12	26	34	19	24	—	24	13	07	10	24	25	20	39	23	29	31	23	17	0
Father's Education	17	00	17	20	18	26	—	27	09	16	10	24	13	19	20	17	07	29	17	17	0
Mother's Education	19	05	11	20	13	25	—	23	04	17	07	21	12	17	19	17	04	25	15	17	0
Books in the Home	24	13	22	34	22	27	—	21	10	13	15	32	12	23	36	20	07	25	21	17	0
Use of Dictionary	15	04	07	17	19	18	—	00	–07	–06	04	05	10	15	22	08	17	09	09	14	2
Family Size	–06	03	–13	–21	–15	–15	—	–15	03	03	–08	–21	–04	–16	–23	–08	04	–12	–10	4	13
Home Background	33	15	26	45	31	34	—	31	15	17	16	38	27	33	48	28	31	41	30	17	0
Terminal Secondary School Level																					
Father's Occupation	06	—	20	06	–02	12	07	18	09	–01	06	—	09	06	09	08	—	21	09	13	2
Father's Education	06	—	27	–01	–02	08	08	20	09	07	14	—	06	07	05	10	—	23	10	13	2
Mother's Education	09	—	22	–04	00	07	06	21	05	06	13	—	02	05	–01	09	—	22	08	12	2
Books in the Home	08	—	22	–01	–01	09	02	11	18	07	11	—	06	04	11	12	—	16	09	13	2
Use of Dictionary	–01	—	04	–05	–01	02	–03	01	–05	–02	–02	—	–07	–05	–04	–01	—	03	–02	4	11
Family Size	–01	—	–02	–05	06	04	–02	–02	03	00	–12	—	–04	–01	–05	00	—	–09	–02	3	10
Home Background	11	—	29	–02	01	10	06	22	18	09	17	—	08	07	14	13	—	31	13	14	1

[a] Correlation coefficients have been recorded with decimal points omitted.

secondary school stage. While the correlations recorded for Australia are weak, they indicate a residual social class influence on achievement at this level. There is, however, little of significance in the correlations recorded between occupational status and attitude to school and school learning.

Socio-cultural Level of the Home and Achievement in Science. Table 4 gives the correlations between the six variables selected, from those available in the investigation to assess the socio-cultural level of the home, and achievement in Science. At the 14-year-old level there are highly consistent relationships between not only occupational status and achievement but also between achievement and the level of education attained by the father and the mother, the number of books in the home, and the use of a dictionary. In addition the table records evidence of a consistent negative relationship between achievement in Science and the number of children in the family from which the students in the samples came. Positive correlations are recorded in three of the four developing countries, India, Iran and Thailand and in Flemish speaking Belgium. In the developing countries a considerable degree of selection of students for post-primary education takes place prior to the age of 14 years. It should be noted that the negative correlations between family size and achievement are greatest in England, Scotland and Japan.

The evidence presented in Table 4 supports the contention that it is not the occupational status of the home *per se* that influences achievement at school, but rather the socio-cultural level of the home. In socio-cultural level we include the availability of reading material, and the use of a dictionary in addition to the educational level attained by the parents. Moreover, the effects of family size would appear to be more closely related to the opportunities available to a child for language development through conversation with adults rather than merely a correlate of social class or occupational status. This interpretation is strongly supported by the work of Marjoribanks (1974) and more recently by Zajonc (1976).

Even at the terminal secondary school level when in most countries selection in preparation for further study at the tertiary level has taken place there is clear evidence of a residual effect on achievement associated with the socio-cultural level of the home in a majority of the countries involved in this study. While the mean values for the two variables family size and use of a dictionary are very small, the correlations recorded suggest that it is still appropriate to speak of an educative home where the presence of books and the level of education attained by the father and the mother influences the achievement of a student at school. Moreover it should be noted that the relationships are greatest in the United States where a high proportion of the age group is still at school, in Hungary where there is evidence of an educated class within the socialist regime, and in Chile a developing country. In Australia the school population at this terminal secondary school stage would appear to have become more homogeneous with respect to the influence of these factors between the 14-year-old level and the terminal secondary school stage. This, however, is because students from a lower socio-cultural home have left school during this period.

Table 4 also records the correlation between achievement in Science and a composite measure formed at each level for Home Background. This composite variable is constructed as a weighted combination of the six component variables examined in Table 4. The weights used at the terminal secondary school level are the same as those used at the 14-year-old level and thus within each country the composite is directly comparable across levels. The procedure of criterion sealing that was employed serves to maximize relationships with the criterion of achievement. Across both age levels there is evidence of consistent relationships between this measure and achievement. The exceptional case involving England should be noted, since a small negative correlation is recorded. At the time the data were collected for this study, a system of selective Grammar Schools was still in existence in England, and although the sampling procedures employed were seriously deficient in certain respects, the evidence would appear to indicate that the English educational system provides a high degree of equality of access at the pre-university level to students from different social backgrounds.

The Clustering of Students within Schools

It is of considerable interest to examine the extent to which students from similar occupational status or socio-cultural backgrounds cluster together in the same school, and the simplest way in which to investigate this effect is to find to what degree the composite variable associated with home background accounts for the variation in level of performance between schools. If this composite variable accounts for a high proportion of the between school variance, then schools have become markedly differentiated with regard to this factor. If, however, only a small proportion of the variance between schools is explained by this variable, then either the variable is suspect and the indices used are unreliable or the schools are homogeneous with regard to this factor.

Before proceeding to present evidence of relationships recorded in this investigation it is important to consider the nature of this variable. Each school in this investigation drew its students from a neighbourhood or community. The schools and the associated neighbourhoods or communities from which they drew their students could be characterized by a collective index of socio-cultural status. This index was given by the mean value of the socio-cultural status of the students in the sample which represented the school. Thus the index represented the socio-cultural level of the school and the neighbourhood or community which it served rather than simply an aggregated measure of the characteristics of the students within it. This variable indicated the level of input into the school, or the quality of the raw material that the school had to draw upon. The effectiveness of the education provided by the school had then to be assessed by what it accomplished with this raw material and by making allowance for the nature of the community in which the school was working.

In Table 5 the evidence relevant to these questions has been presented. The table records not only the percentage of the between school variance accounted for by the composite home background variable, but also the percentage of the total variance that can be attributed to the variation between schools. At the 14-year-old level there is evidence of marked differences between schools in their level of achievement in Science in Scotland, England, the United States and Finland which can be accounted for to a large extent by the home backgrounds of the students and by the socio-cultural nature of the communities served by the schools. Sweden on the other hand would appear to have relatively homogeneous neighbourhoods from which its comprehensive schools draw their students. Australia is close to the mean value for the countries included in the study. It should also be noted that in those countries where some attrition has taken place before the age of 14 years, namely the developing countries of Chile and India and those countries where the school leaving age is below 15 years, namely Hungary and Italy, a tendency is clearly seen for schools to become more homogeneous with respect to home-background factors.

TABLE 5

Variance of Achievement in Science Accounted for by Home Background in between School Analyses

Country	*14-Year-Old Level*		*Terminal Secondary Level*	
	Percent between School to Total Variance (%)	*Percent Home Background to between School Variance (%)*	*Percent between School to Total Variance (%)*	*Percent Home Background to between School Variance (%)*
Australia	16	35	16	9
Chile	–	14	–	36
England	37	64	14	16
F.R.G.	38	46	20	0
Finland	20	61	9	6
France	–	–	–	4
Hungary	28	20	27	41
India	–	4	–	3
Iran	–	Too few cases	–	14
Italy	42	11	65	12
Japan	20	42	–	–
The Netherlands	41	33	29	17
New Zealand	12	43	13	4
Scotland	32	80	17	8
Sweden	8	8	50	9
United States	23	62	17	36
Median	26	37	25	14
Range	33	76	56	41

At the terminal secondary school stage, Hungary, Chile and the United States still retain a relative high degree of heterogeneity between schools with respect to achievement which can be accounted for by differences in the home backgrounds of the students.

Differences between School Types in Australia

In Australia the difference in home background of a school community is related to the provision for education in schools of different types. Three distinct types of schools exist—the Government, Catholic and Independent schools. The schools in the last named group are, in general, conducted by the Protestant Churches and are fee paying schools. Likewise the Catholic schools are fee paying but their fees are generally lower than those charged by the Independent schools. It should be noted that during the years of rapid inflation within Australia substantial grants have been provided to the non-Government schools by both the Commonwealth and State Governments, and that these per capita grants have increased markedly. Thus these different types of schools attract students according to the ability of the parents to pay the fees demanded. It is also important to note that some non-Government schools use a substantial proportion of the grants they receive from governmental sources to provide free places, or places with greatly reduced fees for students from less affluent home backgrounds. Nevertheless the three types of schools draw students from very different home backgrounds. Consequently, it might be expected that there will be marked differences between these three types of schools and the educational achievement and attainment of their students. In Table 6 evidence is presented for the two levels on the estimated holding power of these schools, and on the mean achievement of the students on the Science and Word Knowledge Tests. The data shows that the Independent schools have a much greater holding power among their students, than do the Catholic and Government schools. Likewise, at the 14-year-old level the Independent school students perform at a markedly higher level on both the Science and Word Knowledge Tests than do the Catholic school students, who in turn do better than their coevals in the Government schools. However, at the terminal secondary school level the differences between the students in the three groups is greatly reduced although those from Independent schools would appear to be performing slightly better on both tests.

TABLE 6

Differences between School Type and Educational Outcomes

Type of School	*Estimated Proportion of Target Population %*	*Attainment*	*Mean Achievement*	
		Estimated Holding Power %	*Science*	*Word Knowledge*
14-Year-Old Level				
Government	77	100	23.5	15.0
Catholic	16	100	27.1	18.5
Independent	7	100	32.0	21.6
Terminal Secondary Level				
Government	65	25	24.9	20.5
Catholic	19	36	23.7	21.8
Independent	16	70	25.3	22.3

The Contribution of Type of School

With the evidence of differences in achievement and attainment between students from schools of different types within Australia it is necessary to consider whether the differences recorded can be ascribed to the work of the schools or whether these differences arise from the home backgrounds of the members of the communities or neighbourhoods served by each of these three types of schools.

From research undertaken during the past decade in the United States (Coleman, 1966; Jencks, 1972) the evidence presented has indicated that the influence of the school on educational achievement is comparatively small. In the analyses which follow we examine the data for Australia from the IEA Science Project in a quest for curricular factors which influence educational achievement in Science. The analysis at the 14-year-old level differs from that previously reported by Rosier (1974) in that variables associated with both State and Type of School (whether Government, Catholic or Independent) have been included. To include these characteristics of Australian schools in the analyses, variables have been formed by criterion scaling procedures (see Beaton, 1969) in which the scores for each component variable associated with State or school type are combined using integer weights which are proportional to the mean values of the group. Thus the composite measure so formed, is maximally correlated with the school science achievement test scores.

In the search for curricular factors influencing achievement in Science, it is appropriate to undertake regression analyses in which the school, not the student, is the unit of analysis and in which student and teacher scores have been aggregated to form an average measure for each school. Problems sometimes occur with aggregated measures in the interpretation of the results of analysis; for example, the variable sex is an index associated with the sex of the students in the school at the level tested rather than a measure of the differences between male and female students.

Another aggregated variable of interest included in the analyses we have chosen to call the School Handicap Score. This variable is an index of the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students in a school, as previously explained, it is assumed to be related to the nature of the community in which the school is operating, rather than with the social class characteristics of the students themselves. This measure describes for a school its contextual setting, and the effectiveness of the school curriculum is being assessed by what it achieves after allowance has been made for the nature of the community in which the school is set.

In the analyses which follow variables have been introduced into the regression equation in blocks, and within each block a step-wise regression procedure has been allowed to operate. The first block is concerned with the background characteristics of the school involving the School Handicap Score and the sex of the students in the school. The second block contains the State variable, the Type of School variable (Government, Catholic or Independent) and the Type of Program of the school (academic, technical or comprehensive). In the third block are included all variables associated with the learning conditions in the schools including the curricular variables.

It is necessary to include all relevant variables in any analysis which seeks to identify possible relationships associated with any one variable. Unless all variables associated with factors likely to influence the criterion measure are included in the examination of the data and brought under control by the regression analysis procedures, it is difficult to have confidence in any result that might emerge as making a significant contribution.

In Table 7, where the results of the regression analysis have been recorded, several important indices arising from the analysis have been presented. In the first column we have given the block number for the variable and this is followed by its name. Further details on each of the variables associated with the learning conditions in the schools are presented in the following sections. In the next column the simple correlation (r) between the predictor and the criterion is recorded, followed by the standardized partial regression coefficient (b) when the criterion is regressed on all predictors recorded in the table. In the next column the marginal variance ($100b^2/c$) gives the unique contribution of each variable to the total variance accounted for. In the final column the incremental variance associated with each block as it is introduced in sequence into the regression analysis is recorded and at the foot of this column the total variance explained together with the variance shared jointly by the variables included in the analysis are given. It should be noted that an F-Ratio of 2.00 was set for variables to be included and excluded from the step-wise regression analysis.

TABLE 7
Results of Regression Analyses for Achievement in Science at the 14-Year-Old Level: 1970

Block	*N = 221* *Variable*	*r*	*b*	*Marginal Variance ($100b^2/c$)*	*Block Variance (%)*
1	School Handicap Score	0.63	0.48	13.5	
	Sex of Student in School	–0.17	–0.30	8.0	
	Age in Months of Sample	0.15	0.12	1.4	50.0
2	State	0.35	0.23	3.2	
	Type of School	0.40	[a]		
	Type of Program	0.42	0.09	0.6	14.4
3	Opportunity to Learn	0.34	0.09	0.7	
	Homework Time Science	0.64	0.20	1.6	
	Study Time Science	0.30	[a]		
	Teacher Preparation in Out of School Hours	0.32	0.09	0.6	
	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	0.21	0.10	0.8	
	School Behaviour Scale	0.12	0.07	0.4	5.6
	Total Variance			30.8	70.0
				Joint Variance	39.2

[a] Deleted by regression.

The Science Achievement Regression Analyses at the 14-Year-Old Level

In this sample there were 221 schools with a little under 40 schools chosen at random from the population of schools in each State. From each school 25 students were randomly selected. Since State is included in the analysis as a variable, the data for the schools is not weighted to correct for the lack of proportionality in the selection of schools across the six States.

The variable Type of School was formed in the process of criterion scaling by assigning for Independent schools —3, Catholic schools —2, and Government schools —1. The following additional comments are provided on the variables included in this analysis.

(a) *Age in Months of Sample.* Although the sample of 14-year-olds was an age sample, the evidence indicated that within the sample, the schools with slightly older students did marginally better. It was considered appropriate to include this variable in the analysis to control for any effects associated with variation in age which was an artifact of the sampling.

(b) *Opportunity to Learn.* This measure was obtained from each school and provided information on the opportunity which the students in the sample had had to learn the material tested.

(c) *Homework Time Science.* This variable was a composite measure in which equal weight is given to the two simpler measures of the average amount of homework undertaken by the students in a school in all subjects and in Science.

(d) *Study Time Science.* This variable was a composite measure of the time spent during the current year in hours on the study of Science and the time spent in years on learning Science during previous years. This variable did not enter the regression analysis although the simple correlation was substantial, because it was highly related to variables already included in the regression equation associated with State and Type of Program.

(e) *Teacher Preparation in Out of School Hours.* This variable referred to the average number of hours per week spent by the teachers of Science in a school on lesson preparation in out of school hours.

(f) *Pupil/Teacher Ratio.* This index was obtained by dividing the number of students in a school by the number of teachers in a school.

(g) *School Behaviour Scale.* This Likert type scale of 11 items assessed the perceived degree of flexibility (scores high) or rigidity (scores low) of the school discipline. The measure was an aggregated measure derived from questions about the school which were answered by the students. Although this scale had a low between student reliability, its between school reliability was considerably higher. For further details of these measures see Comber and Keeves (1973).

Results. The results of the regression analyses at the 14-year-old level have been recorded in Table 7. It should be noted that the School Handicap Score and the Sex of Students in School (boys coded 1, girls coded 2) made substantial unique contributions to the total variance accounted for. The State variable correlated with Achievement in Science quite strongly (0.35) and made a significant unique contribution to the variance accounted for (3.2%) with a relatively large partial regression coefficient (0.23). However, while Type of Program provided by the school made a small contribution when other variables were included, the Type of School variable, whether the school was Independent, Catholic or Government, had no independent effect of its own.

The two curricular variables of Opportunity to Learn and Homework Time Science made recognizable contributions after, State and Type of Program were included, while Study Time Science did not.

The only other variables which contributed to accounting for variation between schools in level of achievement in Science were the amount of Teacher Preparation in Out of School Hours, the Pupil/Teacher Ratio and the Student Behaviour Scale, which assessed the students' perceptions of the discipline of the school.

It should be noted that 70 per cent of the variance between schools was accounted for and of this variance over 50 per cent was shared among the variables included in the regression analysis, the remainder being unique to the separate variables. The clearest indication of the independent effect of a measure as given by its partial regression coefficient, and the school type variables of State and Program, and the curricular variables of Opportunity to Learn and Homework had marked effects. In addition, it should be noted that of the hundred or more school connected policy variables assessed in the study and screened for inclusion in the analyses, those associated with school size, class size, teacher characteristics and the costs of schooling did not contribute to accounting for variation in the test scores. The only school policy variable included in this analysis was the Pupil/Teacher Ratio and it showed that the larger the pupil/teacher ratio the higher the level of achievement of the students.

The evidence derived from this analysis indicates that while there are at the 14-year-old level substantial differences in achievement in Science between Independent, Catholic and Government schools, when the home background of the students in the schools is taken into account by a variable associated with Type of School, this variable makes no recognizable contribution to the average level of achievement of the school. Insofar as Type of School contributes to the learning conditions in the schools that have been shown in Table 7 to be significant (such as, Homework Time Science, Teacher Preparation in Out of School Hours, Pupil/Teacher Ratio (with larger classes), the School Behaviour Scale, and Opportunity to Learn) its effects will be significant.

It would appear likely that Type of School would have an influence through time spent on homework, opportunity to learn and through a larger pupil/teacher ratio, particularly since the first-named factor indicates a higher level of motivation. However, the evidence from this analysis indicates that Type of School makes no direct contribution of its own nor does it make a recognizable contribution through other variables not included in the analyses.

Analysis of the data collected in this investigation at the terminal secondary school level to examine the influence of Type of School on achievement in Science reveal a confounding effect due to attrition from the

Government and Catholic schools, that proved difficult to resolve. It was clear that there was little to support a claim that the Independent Non-Government schools in this country made a direct contribution to achievement in Science at this level.

From a further analysis of data collected during the IEA Science Project Lewis (1976) has shown that, across Australia home background is clearly unrelated to transition from school at the terminal level to further education. However, the evidence presented by Rosier (1978) would appear to indicate that in four of the six Australian States, Type of School does influence staying on longer at school between the ages of 14 and 16 years even when the home background of the students in the school is taken into consideration. In addition, Rosier has shown that only in Western Australia and Tasmania has home background a direct influence on the school termination decision between the ages of 14 and 16 years and, his evidence would appear to indicate that the contribution of the home is in influencing achievement and attitudes towards schooling up to the age of 14 years. It is these educational outcomes which must be seen to play a major part in whether a student continues with schooling beyond the age of 16 years.

Educational Policy Issues

In a previous paper (Keeves, 1975) the three stages in the development of the concept and practice of educational equality within Australia have been described and examined. The conservative view was in operation for a long period. In association with the remarkable expansion of Australian education during the years which followed World War II came a more liberal approach to the equality of educational opportunity. However, it was the publication of the Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel, 1973) which emphasized a needs concept for the provision of education in this country that heralded a marked change in public thinking about educational equality.

This approach is consistent with the view advanced by Williams (1976) and discussed earlier in which it was shown that children from higher status homes, not only receive from their parents a genetic endowment, and are reared in a more educative environment, but they are also further advantaged by their capability to influence the environment in which they live to foster their own intellectual development. Insofar as some individuals in our society are thus able to take greater advantage of the environment in which they live, it would appear appropriate to identify the needs of the remainder and attempt to compensate for the restricting circumstances in which they find themselves.

Nevertheless, the question that has been raised in the country since a change of government in 1975 is to what extent should publicly provided resources be used to assist children who are less well endowed to overcome their disadvantage. Coleman has posed the essential question in succinct terms:

> A society cannot make an implementational decision to create equal opportunity for all children within it. What it must do instead is to

> decide what level of public resources and what imbalance of public resources it should invest to reduce the level of inequality that arises from private resources (Coleman, 1973, 135).

Furthermore, it would appear important for personal development and satisfaction that the individual should retain the initiative in his interaction with compensatory provision.

In the years that have followed the publication of *Schools in Australia,* the programs introduced by the Schools Commission to assist schools to fulfil the needs for a better education for their students have established the principles of inviting the recipients of a grant to share in the overcoming of obstacles by preparing a submission for additional support, and of evaluating the effectiveness of the program undertaken. These programs have focused on the needs of schools, and to a lesser extent of individuals within schools.

The growth and development of the pre-school and child care work throughout Australia during the past five years has also stemmed in part from a policy of providing compensatory programs for those who might be educationally disadvantaged. However, the further expansion of such provision would appear to have been curtailed because of uncertainty about the effectiveness of the programs in promoting sufficient intellectual, emotional and physical development among young children and because of severe limits to the funds available.

A third field of activity has been in the implementation of programs to aid the handicapped child. While many changes have been introduced in the provision of special education in Australian schools, it is evident that a great deal more remains to be done. The evidence of the Australian Studies in School Performance which have revealed that substantial numbers of children leave school each year unable to read, calculate and write effectively and the recommendations of the House of Representatives Committee on Specific Learning Difficulties (Cadman, 1976) have to date largely been ignored presumably because of the severe financial constraints imposed in order to control inflation.

However, the economic recession that has been experienced within Australia since 1975, has helped to expose a further and extremely serious field of educational disadvantage. Youths who leave school at the ages 14 and 15 years and who are unable to find employment come, in the main, from homes that are lowest on a socio-economic scale. These youths have grown up in a low quality environment, and many have not mastered the basic skills of reading, writing and number work. Moreover, they would appear to be unable to live satisfactory lives because they have little knowledge of how to influence the environment in which they live to further their own growth and development during the later years of adolescence. It would appear extremely unfortunate that solutions to these problems are not being seen as lying within the field of education and have largely been ignored by those responsible for educational planning in Australia.

To concentrate on one field of activity to the exclusion of all others in the provision of greater opportunities for disadvantaged children would be highly undesirable. Moreover, for educators to leave unexplored one area of pressing need could well build up disastrous consequences for the future.

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STUDENT ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS SCHOOL: PROFILE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND QUEENSLAND

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The project reported here was undertaken by the South Australian Chapter of The Australian College of Education utilizing data made available by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) through the auspices of the data bank archive located at the Flinders University of South Australia. The data were originally collected by Dr. Malcolm Rosier, Chief Research Officer, Australian Council for Educational Research, for the IEA Science project in 1970 and for the IEA Follow-up Project in 1972.

The project was undertaken in two parts. In the first part the basic analyses of the attitudes and motivations of a sample of students continuing at school in South Australia and Queensland were carried out. The second part involves some comment on key aspects of the project such as the educational climate at the time when the data were collected as well as the educational and socio-economic structures operating within the two States concerned. The two parts, undertaken separately, were brought together in a joint presentation to the Annual Conference of The Australian College of Education in Canberra in May 1978. This report similarly brings together the two parts, the project itself and the comments on the project.

The original collectors of the data and the IEA bear no responsibility for the analyses or the interpretations presented. These, of course, are the responsibility of the authors alone.

Aims and Purposes

Job satisfaction is an important goal in the work place, not least because it is considered to be associated with increased productivity. Whether or not school satisfaction is also associated with increased educational productivity, it is an important goal of enlightened administrators. We like to think that school is a happy place, or at least not an unhappy one. Yet how satisfied are students generally with school? Do students gain satisfaction from work at school? Do they agree that school days are the happiest days? How interesting do students rate the subjects they take at school? How relevant or useful do students perceive these subject to be for their future occupations? Is school satisfaction different for male students than for female students? Does it vary according to whether students attend large schools or small schools, city or country schools, State or non-State schools? Is school satisfaction related to home background? And how does school satisfaction relate to school achievement and to academic self-concept? It is these kinds of questions with which this paper deals.

These kinds of questions have practical as well as theoretical interest (Jackson and Getzels, 1959). At the purely theoretical level educational research, like research in the social sciences generally, is concerned with seeking generalizations about behaviour. In the affective domain mapped by Krathwohl *et al.* (1964) it is important to discover how feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards school relate to functioning within the school setting as well as how these feelings relate to characteristics of the home and characteristics of the school itself. Keeves (1974) noted how few studies there are which have examined attitudes to school in relation to the home environment of students. There are still fewer studies which relate attitudes to school to broad features of schools like size, location and type in contrast to more microaspects of classrooms like methods of teaching. At the practical level research into dissatisfaction with school has a direct bearing on the problem of irregular school attendance, highlighted in the Australian literacy and numeracy survey (Bourke and Keeves, 1977). Such research, too, may be expected to shed light on the wider problem of why students drop out of school and on the general malaise of alienation from school, identified as one of the major issues facing secondary education today (Van Til, 1976).

In the search for generalizations about human behaviour, Anderson (1969) reminds us of the twin problems arising from errors of over-generalization and under-generalization. In the one case, Anderson notes, there is the tendency to assume that what is discovered for one group of subjects applies more widely while, in the other, it is assumed that what is discovered for one particular group applies to that group alone. That the danger of cultural bias or the error of over-generalization is a potential problem in measuring attitudes towards school is evidenced in the finding that students in different countries hold quite different views about school and about learning at school (Husén, 1967). At the same time to offset the problem of the error of under-generalization it is important to assess attitudes to school, if possible, across different education systems.

The study reported here was conducted across two state education systems, those of South Australia and Queensland. The advantages of selecting two Australian states are that the educational structures and the socioeconomic structures in these states are broadly similar. Thus the problem of confounding due to the introduction of extraneous variables is minimized and possible distortion arising from examination of a single system is avoided. In any study chance relationships may emerge simply as a result of the significance levels chosen. Replication of the study reduces markedly the probability of occurrence of spurious relationships, thereby facilitating the detection of genuine relationships between variables.

There was a further advantage of selecting South Australia and Queensland as the two states in which to assess student satisfaction with school. The project initiated by the Queensland Chapter of the College of Education (Botsman, 1978) had as its aim to gauge public attitudes to education. Insofar as Queensland and South Australia are thought to differ along certain dimensions, it was considered that a comparison between states of attitudes to education might reveal factors of considerable interest and a decision was therefore made to replicate the attitude survey in South Australia (Dunn, 1978). However, both the Queensland project and the South Australian replication study omit possibly the most important group in the education process — students — and hence their attitudes to education. Nor does either project seek the attitudes of other concerned groups such as parents or teachers, except in an incidental way. The present study, then, in a very real sense, complements the project of the Queensland Chapter and the replication study. While these other studies seek to determine the attitudes of the general public to education and to schools, the present investigation aims to analyse student satisfaction with school by seeking the opinions of students themselves.

In summary, this paper reports the results of a study on school satisfaction in two Australian states, South Australia and Queensland. The specific aims of the study are to examine feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards secondary school, including interest in subjects taken at school and their perceived relevance to future occupations, between students of different sex; between students from different home backgrounds; between students attending different types of school; and between students of differing abilities.

The Data Base

The data on which this study is based were originally collected as part of the international survey of science education in nineteen countries (Comber and Keeves, 1973). Australia was one of the participating countries and for Australia's part in the survey, samples of 14-year-old students were carefully selected and tested throughout the country. The sampling procedures, based on two-stage probability samples, are described in detail by Rosier and Williams (1973). Two years after the original data were collected, a decision was made by the Australian Council for Educational Research to follow up the students in Australia, now aged 16. Of the total 5,307 students originally sampled, 3,601 could be located two years later and, of these, 2,394 were still at school, the remaining 1,207 having left to join the workforce. A detailed description of this follow-up project is contained in Rosier (1978). In South Australia there were 498 continuing students and in Queensland, 354 continuing students. These students were attending Government, Catholic and Independent schools in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions of each State. It is these 852 students, carefully sampled in the year immediately following the last compulsory year of schooling, and their parents, teachers and schools, together with the various questionnaires administered to these different groups, that constitute the data base for the present study.

This report focuses on those parts of the data relating to student satisfaction with school.

School Satisfaction and Interest in Subjects at School

School satisfaction is defined here in a similar way to the Cornell studies of satisfaction in work and retirement (Smith, 1967) as an effective response of the student to school. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with school is seen to result from each student's experiences at school in relation to his own values, in other words, to what he wants or expects from school.

Rather surprisingly, there was not a large number of studies to suggest the likely outcomes to the questions posed in this study. At the primary level an early study by Tenenbaum (1944) found that girls were more favourably inclined towards school than were boys but that measures of ability, achievement and conduct were not correlated with students' attitudes to school. At the secondary level, Jackson and Getzels (1959) also found sex differences and similarly noted that satisfied and dissatisfied students did not clearly differ on ability and achievement measures. Interestingly, these findings parallel those of industrial psychologists investigating work satisfaction and levels of production (Fleishman, 1967). However, these studies were not conducted in Australia and Anderson's (1969) caution, supported by Husén's (1967) findings, need to be borne in mind. Keeves (1974) described an earlier study of his which found, at the lower secondary level, that girls' liking of school was significantly stronger than that of boys in New South Wales but that in Victoria differences were not significantly different. In a further study, conducted in the Australian Capital Territory, Keeves (1972) found that girls were more positively inclined towards school than were boys.

The relationships between liking for school and home background factors were also investigated by Keeves (1972). However, no strong relationships were found to emerge in that study. No Australian studies were found in which student satisfaction with school was related directly to features of schools like size, location and type.

In the area of students' interests in subjects taken at school there are several studies which suggest that subjects like Mathematics and Science are more preferred by males (e.g. Meyer, 1963, Keeves, 1972) while subjects like English are more preferred by females. As a rule also, more girls take commercial subjects than do boys and, further, the expectation would be that girls express a higher interest in such subjects than do boys.

The only proposition, then, for which there seemed some support from previous research is that sex differences might be expected on the school satisfaction scale and on attitudes expressed towards subjects like Mathematics, Science, English and Commercial subjects. Whether differences would emerge between students of different home backgrounds, between students attending different types of school, between students of differing abilities, or between students in different states were open questions.

The Measures

The measures included in the study are organized into seven groups: home background factors, school factors, individual attributes, school satisfaction, interest in school subjects, relevance of school subjects, and classroom behaviour. The first three groups of measures represent the antecedent or independent variables and the last four groups of measures represent the attitudinal outcomes or dependent variables.

Home Background Factors

Three composite measures of the home background of students were developed following the same procedures reported by Anderson (1978). Because the composition of these measures is of importance to the present investigation, the procedures are detailed below. The measures of reliability quoted are based on the total group of students from the follow-up study continuing at school (N = 2,394). The three composite measures of home background are Socioeducational Level, Literacy Resources, and Parental Encouragement.

> *Socioeducational Level.* Socioeducational Level is a composite made up of three variables: Father's Occupation, Father's Education and Mother's Education.
>
> Father's Occupation was coded from students' responses to the question:

1. What is your father's occupation? (If your father is dead, give your guardian's occupation, or, if you do not have a guardian, give your father's occupation before he died.)

Students were also asked to describe their fathers' occupations and responses were then coded using the Australian occupational classification developed by Broom *et al.* (1965). This is a nine-point scale extending from Labourer through to Upper Professional.

Father's and Mother's Education were elicited from two questionnaire items of the form:

2. How many years of full-time education (including school, university etc.) did your father (mother) receive? (*indicate one*)

   A None at all (0 years)

   B Up to 5 years

   C More than 5 years — up to 10 years

   D More than 10 years — up to 15 years

   E More than 15 years.

The same procedure was followed as in Rosier (1978) of adopting a principal components approach and combining the three measures weighted by the corresponding rounded factor score coefficients. Students with missing data were assigned the mean socioeducational values obtained by students of the same school. The reliability of the composite variable using the omega reliability coefficient (Heise and Bohrnstedt, 1970) is 0.68 for the students continuing at school.

For the analyses reported below the combined distribution of students in South Australia and Queensland was split to form two groups. Forty per cent of students were defined as coming from Low socioeducational-level-homes and 60 per cent from High socioeducational-level-homes.

Literacy Resources. Literacy Resources in the home is a composite of the following two student questionnaire items:

1. How often is an English dictionary used by anyone in your home? (*indicate one*)

   A often

   B occasionally

   C never, or we do not have an English dictionary at home.

2. How many books are there in your home? (Do not count newspapers, magazines or comics.)

   A none

   B 1-10

   C 11-25

   D 26-50

   E more than 50.

The items were coded such that frequent use of a dictionary and greater number of books were given most weight (3, 2, 1 and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively). The items were then combined, doubling the weights assigned to the first item. This procedure was equivalent, though not identical, to that of Rosier (1978). The reliability of the two-item composite using the omega coefficient (Heise and Bohrnstedt, 1970) is 0.35 for the students continuing at school.

As for Socioeducational Level, the combined frequency distribution of students in South Australia and Queensland on Literacy Resources was split to form two groups. Because of the clustering of scores the most meaningful division resulted in 19 per cent of students in homes described as Low on Literacy Resources and 80 per cent of students in homes described as High on Literacy Resources (for 1 per cent of students data were missing).

Parental Encouragement. Parental Encouragement is a composite of four items in the student questionnaire:

1. When you talk at home, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   A always or almost always insist that you speak correctly?
   B sometimes insist that you speak correctly?
   C let you speak how you please?
2. When you show your parents anything you have written, do they (*indicate one*):
   A always or almost always check your spelling?
   B sometimes check your spelling?
   C hardly ever or never check your spelling?
3. In your spare time at home, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   A encourage you to read (books, not comics) as much as possible?
   B sometimes suggest you read (books, not comics)?
   C not mind if you never read?
4. When you get home from school, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   A always or almost always want to know how you have done?
   B sometimes inquire about your school work?
   C hardly ever or never ask you about school?

The items were coded so that greater parental encouragement received the greater weight. Factor analysis revealed one major factor with factor loadings all above 0.45. Following Rosier (1978) the items were summed using unit weights. The reliability of the composite variable using the omega coefficient (Heise and Bohrnstedt, 1970) is 0.57 for the students continuing at school.

Like the two variables above, the Parental Encouragement combined frequency distribution of South Australian and Queensland students was, for the analyses presented below, split to form a dichotomy. For 56 per cent of students Parental Encouragement was termed Low and for 42 per cent of students Parental Encouragement was termed High (for 2 per cent of students data were missing).

School Factors

The three features of schools for which measures were obtained were Type of School, Location of School and School Size.

Type of School. The three main types of school were coded as Government, Catholic and Independent. A decision was made for the analyses reported below to group Catholic and Independent secondary schools together. This gave a dichotomous variable: State and non-State secondary schools. Across South Australia and Queensland 73 per cent of the student sample were attending State schools and 27 per cent were attending non-State schools.

Location of School. If a school was located in the Capital city of each state, it was coded as a metropolitan school; otherwise it was coded non-metropolitan. Across South Australia and Queensland 61 per cent of students were identified as attending metropolitan schools and 39 per cent as attending non-metropolitan schools.

School Size. The total secondary school enrolment for each school was obtained from the School Questionnaire. If a school had a student enrolment up to 600, it was classified for the analyses reported below as a Small School; schools with student enrolments in excess of 600 were classified as Large Schools. Grouping together students from South Australia and Queensland, 33 per cent were found to be attending small schools as thus defined and 66 per cent were attending large schools.

Individual Attributes

The individual attributes included in the analyses were Sex of Student, General Achievement and Academic Self-Concept.

Sex of Student. This variable was coded Male or Female from students' responses to an item in the Student Questionnaire. For the combined group of South Australian and Queensland students there were 51 per cent male students and 49 per cent female students.

General Achievement. A measure of student achievement at school was obtained by combining, using unit weights, each student's corrected score on a test of Word Knowledge and a Science Test.

The Word Knowledge test is derived from the IEA Population II and IV Word Knowledge Tests which are reported in Comber and Keeves (1973) and the statistical properties of which are described by Thorndike (1973). The tests are described by Walker (1976) as reasonably satisfactory measures of verbal ability. To increase further the reliability of the measure, the test was lengthened, in the Australian follow-up project (Rosier, 1978), from 40 to 60 items.

The Science Test comprises 30 items from the IEA Population II and IV Science Tests (Comber and Keeves, 1973). The items selected were shown by Rosier (1978) to have satisfactory levels of item facility and item discrimination and also to cover adequately the domain of science content and behavioural objective originally drawn up by the IEA testing committee.

Rosier (1978), using all continuing students in the follow-up project, formed the combined score on the test of Word Knowledge and the Science Test into approximate quintiles. For the analyses reported below the quintile distribution was split at the approximate median. The bottow two quintiles were then coded as Low General Achievement and the top three quintiles were coded as High General Achievement. The combined South Australian and Queensland students were thus formed into two groups of 39 per cent and 61 per cent of students respectively.

Academic Self-Concept. Following Rosier (1978), the composite variable, Academic Self-Concept, was formed from four items in the Student Questionnaire: Self-estimate of ability, Importance of obtaining good results, Importance of continuing education, and Importance of comparing results. The four items appeared as follows:

1. What do *you* think of your ability? (Choose one):
    (1) *far below* average
    (2) *below* average
    (3) *slightly below* average
    (4) *slightly above* average
    (5) *above* average
    (6) *far above* average.
2. *How important is it* to yourself that you get good results in tests and exams? (Choose one):
    (1) not at all important
    (2) slightly important
    (3) fairly important
    (4) very important.
3. *How important is it* to yourself that you continue with your education after leaving secondary school? (Choose one):
    (1) not at all important
    (2) slightly important
    (3) fairly important
    (4) very important.
4. *How important is it* that you know how your results compare with those of other students? (Choose one):
    (1) not at all important
    (2) slightly important
    (3) fairly important
    (4) very important.

Standardized scores were computed for all subjects in the follow-up project and these were summed using unit weights. The resulting distribution of scores were formed into approximate quintiles (Rosier, 1978). Like the General Achievement measure, the combined South Australian and Queensland student quintile distribution was split at the approximate median. This resulted in a Low Academic Self-Concept group (47 per cent of students) and a High Academic Self-Concept group (52 per cent of students) with approximately 1 per cent of students for whom there were missing data on one or more items.

School Satisfaction

The School Satisfaction Scale comprised 10 Likert-type items contained within a group of 36 questionnaire items. The items included both statements and questions, for which the response was respectively Agree/Disagree or Yes/No. The actual items to which students were asked to respond were as follows:

1. The most enjoyable part of my life is the time I spend in school.
2. I generally dislike my school work.
3. There are many school subjects I don't like.
4. I enjoy everything about school.
5. School is not very enjoyable.
6. The only things I look forward to in school are weekends and holidays.
7. Would you like to leave school as soon as possible?
8. The only thing I like about going to school is the opportunity to meet my friends.
9. I hope eventually to study at a college or university.
10. I agree with people who say, "School days are the happiest days".

Four of the ten items were worded such that an "Agree" or "Yes" response indicated satisfaction with school (scored +1; "Disagree" or "No" scored —1; and "Omit" scored 0); the remaining six items were worded such that "Disagree" or "No" responses indicated satisfaction with school (these items were reverse scored). Factor analysis of the responses of the 852 continuing students in South Australia and Queensland resulted in two factors of which the first was readily interpretable as satisfaction/dissatisfaction with school. Factor loadings on the unrotated factor matrix ranged from 0.35 to 0.58. The second factor, which was identified principally by the first and last items, was less easily interpretable. Coefficient alpha computed on the eigen value of the first factor gave a reliability estimate of 0.75.

Interest in School Subjects

Students' interest in the subjects taken at school were gauged from responses to the following six questionnaire items:

How *interesting* do you find the following school subjects? (Choose one in each row):

	I am not studying this subject this year	*not at all interesting*	*slightly interesting*	*fairly interesting*	*very interesting*
1. English	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2. Mathematics	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
3. Science	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4. Social science subjects (history, geography etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
5. Commercial subjects (typing, book-keeping etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6. Practical subjects (cookery, woodwork etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Relevance of School Subjects

The perceived relevance or usefulness of subjects taken at school was gauged from students' responses to the following six questionnaire items:

How *relevant* or useful are these subjects to what you will be doing in your future occupation? (Choose one in each row):

	I am not studying this subject this year	*not relevant*	*slightly relevant*	*fairly relevant*	*very relevant*
1. English	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2. Mathematics	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
3. Science	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4. Social science (history, geography etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
5. Commercial subjects (typing, book-keeping etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6. Practical subjects (cookery, woodwork etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Classroom Behaviour

A measure of classroom behaviour was obtained from students' descriptions of how they behave in class.

1. How would you describe your behaviour in class?
   (1) I often seem to be in trouble.
   (2) I am sometimes in trouble.
   (3) I am hardly ever in trouble.

Results of the Study

Profile of Students and Schools in Two States

What schools do the students sampled in this study go to? Writing about students in South Australia, Blandy and Goldsworthy (1977, p. 66) comment:

> Probably no other question probing the background of a South Australian carries a greater load of social implications. Religion, politics, social class, life-style and even adherence to particular League football clubs can probably be more accurately guessed from the response to this one question than to any other which one could think of.

In South Australia 82 per cent of the students sampled were attending state secondary schools and 18 per cent were at either Catholic or Independent schools; in Queensland only 61 per cent of the students sampled were at state schools compared with 39 per cent at non-state schools. This is a marked difference between states and, if Blandy and Goldsworthy are correct in their assumption about the importance of the school attended, this factor needs to be taken into account in interpreting the results below.

Seventy-three per cent of students attend metropolitan schools in South Australia with 27 per cent at non-metropolitan schools; in Queensland only 44 per cent are at metropolitan schools and 56 per cent are at non-metropolitan schools. Again this is a clear difference between the two states, a finding which is in accord with the larger rural base of Queensland compared with that of South Australia.

Thirty-six per cent of the South Australian students are at schools with fewer than 600 students (defined here as small schools) and 64 per cent are at large schools; in Queensland, by contrast, 28 per cent of the students attend small schools and 67 per cent attend large schools (for 5 per cent of students the size of school attended was missing). While the proportion of students in large schools is approximately the same in both states, there is a tendency for a greater number of the students sampled to be in small schools in South Australia than in Queensland.

The picture of students in schools that emerges is that the "typical" student in South Australia has a very high chance of being at a state school in metropolitan Adelaide with a student enrolment greater than 600. In Queensland the "typical" student is also likely to be attending a state high school though the odds are less high and this school is most likely to be a large country high school (or, more accurately, a school outside metropolitan Brisbane).

The home environments of students in South Australia and Queensland appear broadly similar, at least as they have been measured in this study. The "typical" student in each state comes from a home of high average socioeducational level (4.9 in both states on an 8-point scale); literacy resources in the home is high (approximately 9.5 for both states on a 12-point scale); while parental encouragement appears neither very high nor low (approximately 6.9 for both states on a 12-point scale).

As far as individual attributes of students are concerned, males and females are quite evenly split in the South Australian sample while in Queensland there are marginally more males (52 per cent) represented than females (48 per cent). This difference in sex representation between states does not appear large, yet sex is known to be related to attitudes. There is a marked difference between the states on the measures of general achievement and academic self-concept. For both general achievement ($t = 4.01$, $p = 0.000$) and academic self-concept ($t = 2.63$, $p = 0.009$) the differences favour students in Queensland. These findings are not entirely unexpected in view of an earlier study (Anderson, 1978) which found measures of cognitive performance to be positively correlated with the selectivity of education systems in Australia; and in that study Queensland schools in general were shown to be more selective, that is they retained a smaller proportion of 16-year-olds, than did South Australian schools.

The major purpose of the present study is not to make inter-state comparisons. Nevertheless, it is important to examine the two state samples in terms of the antecedent or explanatory variables employed in the subsequent analyses. In summary, it is noted that there are few differences between the samples on any of the home background factors or on sex. There are marked differences though on school factors with a greater proportion of students in Queensland attending non-state schools and non-metropolitan schools; and a smaller proportion of students in South Australia attending small schools. As well, the general achievement and academic self-concept of students in Queensland is higher than that of the corresponding sample of students in South Australia.

Attitudes to Subjects Studied at School

In analysing students' responses to subjects studied at school which are rated as interesting and which are perceived to be relevant for later career choices, it is necessary to take account of those students who do not study particular subjects. Such student responses were coded with missing responses and accordingly the numbers of students expressing preference for particular subjects vary from subject to subject.

Table 1 shows the mean preference rating for six major groupings of subjects studied in secondary schools in South Australia and Queensland. Examination of the mean ratings shows that the subjects rated most interesting in South Australia are practical and commercial subjects; in Queensland practical subjects are also rated most popular followed by science. Practical and commercial subjects, it is to be noted, are taken by a relatively small proportion of students in both states. If examination is made of those subjects which are rated most interesting and which are taken by a majority of students in each sample, a remarkable similarity between the two states is observed. For both South Australia and Queensland the most interesting subject is thought to be science, followed in turn by social sciences, English and, finally, mathematics.

TABLE 1

Most Interesting Subjects Taken at School: Mean Responses for Students in South Australia (N = 498) and Queensland (N = 354)

Subject	South Australia			Queensland		
	$\bar{X}^a$	*s.d.*	*N*	$\bar{X}^a$	*s.d.*	*N*
English	3.9	0.9	479	3.9	0.9	353
Mathematics	3.8	0.9	438	3.9	0.9	294
Science	4.2	0.8	431	4.3	0.8	269
Social Sciences	4.1	0.9	419	4.2	0.8	211
Commercial	4.1	0.9	104	3.9	1.0	80
Practical	4.[illegible]	0.7	161	4.5	0.8	97

[a] Interpretation of means:
2 = Not at all interesting
3 = Slightly interesting
4 = Fairly interesting
5 = Very interesting

It is interesting to compare subjects which are thought to be of most relevance for the future (Table 2) with subjects considered most interesting. Again examination is made of those subjects taken by a majority of students in both states. In South Australia mathematics is perceived as the most relevant or useful subject. This is followed by English, then science and, finally, social sciences. In Queensland a very similar pattern holds. English and mathematics tie as the most relevant subjects, followed by science and the social sciences. The general inversion, for both states, of mathematics and social sciences when ratings are made according to interest and relevance is clearly observable. Mathematics is rated lowest in interest but highest in relevance; social science subjects are rated of high interest but low relevance. English, too, is not a high interest subject but it is considered very relevant for future occupations. Science, interestingly, is rated as a very high interest subject but of lesser relevance, at least compared with mathematics and English.

TABLE 2

Relevance of Subjects Studied at School for Future Occupations: Mean Responses for Students in South Australia (N = 498) and Queensland (N = 354)

Subject	South Australia			Queensland		
	$\bar{X}^a$	*s.d.*	*N*	$\bar{X}^a$	*s.d.*	*N*
English	4.1	0.9	478	4.2	0.9	351
Mathematics	4.2	1.0	441	4.2	0.9	297
Science	4.0	1.1	422	4.1	1.1	264
Social Sciences	3.3	1.1	411	3.5	1.1	204
Commercial	4.0	1.1	112	3.7	1.2	82
Practical	3.6	1.2	161	3.9	1.1	90

[a] Interpretation of means:
2 = Not relevant
3 = Slightly relevant
4 = Fairly relevant
5 = Very relevant

School Satisfaction

The School Satisfaction scale of ten items taps a range of attitudes from "generally dislike school work and wish to leave school as soon as possible" to "enjoy the time spent at school and hope eventually to study at a college or university". Scores on the scale range from —10 through zero to +10, with negative scores indicating dissatisfaction and positive scores satisfaction with school. As an aid to interpreting scores, the following cut-off points were formed:

Range	*Rating*	*Remarks*
—6 to —10	Very dissatisfied	For a score to be in this range, there would need to be 8 negative responses to 2 positive responses or a response pattern more extreme.
—2 to —5	Moderately dissatisfied	
—1 to +1	Neutral	For a score to be in this range, responses would need to be evenly split or 5 : 4 in either direction with one item omitted.
+2 to +5	Moderately satisfied	
+6 to +10	Very satisfied	As above : 8 positive responses to 2 negative responses or a response pattern more extreme.

Student responses on School Satisfaction, for the total sample (N = 852) divided by state, are shown in Table 3. Leaving aside neutral responses (approximately 13 per cent in each state), it is seen that about 48 per cent of South Australian students express satisfaction with school compared with 63 per cent of Queensland students; the percentages expressing a moderate degree of dissatisfaction are 19 per cent in South Australia and 12 per cent in Queensland; while the percentages expressing extreme dissatisfaction are 18 per cent for South Australia and 11 per cent for Queensland. These responses show fairly clearly that students in the Queensland sample express more satisfaction with school than do their counterparts in South Australia. The average student response for Queensland (2.12) falls in the moderately satisfied range while the average for students in South Australia (0.38) is in the neutral range: this difference is highly significant (t=4.95, p=0.000).

TABLE 3

School Satisfaction Scores for Secondary Students in South Australia (N = 498) and Queensland (N = 354)

Score	*South Australia*		*Queensland*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Very dissatisfied (−6 to −10)	90	18.0	40	11.2
Moderately dissatisfied (−2 to −5)	96	19.2	43	12.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied (−1 to +1)	69	13.9	44	12.4
Moderately satisfied (+2 to +5)	137	27.6	109	30.9
Very satisfied (+6 to +10)	104	20.8	114	32.2
Missing	2	0.4	4	1.1
Total	498	100.0	354	100.0

Classroom Behaviour

A measure of classroom behaviour was included in the study, since this variable is often considered to be associated with student attitudes and motivations. It is recalled that students were asked to describe their behaviour in class. The responses of the South Australian and Queensland students appear in Table 4. Just less than two-thirds of the students in both states say they are hardly ever in trouble; while about one-third say they are sometimes in trouble; only about 4 per cent in both states claim that they are often in trouble. These differences between states are not significant ($t = 0.26$, $p = 0.794$). It is possible, of course, that quite different results might have been obtained had the same question been asked of the students' teachers.

TABLE 4

Self-Reported Classroom Behaviour: Responses of Secondary Students in South Australia (N = 498) and Queensland (N = 354)

Classroom Behaviour	*South Australia*		*Queensland*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Often in trouble	23	4.6	15	4.2
Sometimes in trouble	172	34.5	129	36.4
Hardly ever in trouble	302	60.6	210	59.3
Missing	1	0.2	0	0.0
Total	498	100.0	354	100.0

Home, School and Individual Factors

The analysis of results above has focused on presenting a broad picture of students in schools in both South Australia and Queensland. Almost inevitably one is tempted to make comparisons between states and indeed the results of student attitudes towards subjects in school, student satisfaction with school and self-reported classroom behaviour are presented to facilitate such comparisons. These findings are of general interest and it is useful for teachers, principals, and educational administrators in each state to be aware of such student opinion.

Of considerably greater interest, both theoretically and from a practical point of view, is the relationship between student attitudes and motivations and what were termed above the antecedent variables of the home, the school and the student. A knowledge of the relationship between these variables does not answer questions of cause and effect. However, such knowledge does begin to provide some insight into student motivations, interests and attitudes.

TABLE 5

Differences (t - tests) in Attitudinal Outcomes between Students from Homes that Vary in Terms of (a) Socioeducational Level, (b) Literacy Resources, and (c) Parental Encouragement: South Australia and Queensland

Attitudes and Motivations	*Home Background*					
	Socioeducational Level[a]		*Literacy Resources*[a]		*Parental Encouragement*[a]	
	S.A.	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*
Interest in Subjects Taken at School						
1 English	H	H			H	H
2 Mathematics						
3 Science			H	H		
4 Social Sciences	H	H		H	H	
5 Commercial						
6 Practical						
Relevance of Subjects Taken						
1 English				H	H	
2 Mathematics						
3 Science			H			
4 Social Sciences		H			H	H
5 Commercial						
6 Practical						
Class Behaviour						
School Satisfaction	H		H	H	H	

[a] H indicates High group > Low group ($p < 0.05$)

The final section of the paper examines home background factors, school factors and individual attributes in relation to interest in subjects taken at school, the perceived relevance of these subjects, school satisfaction, and classroom behaviour.

> *Home Background Factors.* The three home background variables Socioeducational Level, Literacy Resources and Parental Encouragement — were each split to form a High group and a Low group of students. A series of t-tests was then computed over the four sets of attitudinal outcomes (Interest in Subjects, Relevance of Subjects, School Satisfaction and Classroom Behaviour) for South Australia and Queensland separately. For conciseness the results are presented in tabular form (Table 5) with only those differences significant at the 5 per cent level appearing. The letter "H" in Table 5 indicates that the High group (say on Socioeducational Level) expressed a greater interest (in, say, English) than the Low group on Socioeducational level. This result, as inspection of Table 5 shows, holds for both Queensland and South Australia.
>
> The advantage of, in essence, replicating the one study in two states is that more permanent relationships between variables are shown up. When computing a number of t-tests, some will appear

significant by chance (the actual proportion corresponding to the significance level selected). If, however, a significant difference emerges for both South Australia and Queensland, there is a greatly increased likelihood of a genuine difference. Note is made below of those significant differences which appear for students in both states.

The High Socioeducational Level group rate English and social science subjects as more interesting than the Low Socioeducational Level group of students. Students in the High Literacy Resources group, however, rate science as more interesting and, in addition, are more satisfied with school than the corresponding Low group. Students in the High Parental Encouragement group consider English more interesting and perceive social science subjects as more relevant to future occupations than do the Low Parental Encouragement group of students.

School Factors. The same procedure as above was adopted of computing t-tests between types of school (State and non-state), between school locations (metropolitan and non-metropolitan), and between school sizes (Small and Large) for all sets of attitudinal outcomes. The results for both South Australia and Queensland are shown in Table 6 with, again, only those differences significant at the 0.05 level appearing.

TABLE 6

Differences (t – tests) in Attitudinal Outcomes between Students Attending (a) State and Non-State Schools, (b) Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Schools, and (c) Small and Large Schools: South Australia and Queensland

Attitudes and Motivations	*Schools*					
	Type[a]		*Location*[b]		*Size*[c]	
	S.A.	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*
Interest in Subjects Taken at School						
1 English		N/S				
2 Mathematics						
3 Science						
4 Social Sciences	N/S	N/S	M		S	
5 Commercial						
6 Practical						
Relevance of Subjects Taken						
1 English						
2 Mathematics	S		M			
3 Science			M			L
4 Social Sciences	N/S				S	
5 Commercial						S
6 Practical						
Class Behaviour						
School Satisfaction						

[a] N/S indicates Non-State > State ($p < 0.05$)
S indicates State > Non-State ($p < 0.05$)
[b] M indicates Metropolitan > Non-Metropolitan ($p < 0.05$)
[c] S indicates Small > Large ($p < 0.05$)
L indicates Large > Small ($p < 0.05$)

Few significant differences appear on the major school factors and still fewer of these hold over both states. In fact the only consistent difference to note is that social science subjects are rated more interesting in non-State schools than in state schools.

Individual Attributes. A series of t-tests was computed between male and female students and between students high and low respectively on general Achievement and Academic Self-Concept for the four sets of attitudinal outcomes. Those differences which are significant at the 0.05 level are shown in Table 7 for South Australia and Queensland separately.

TABLE 7

Attitudinal Outcomes between (a) Male and Female Students, (b) High and Low Achieving Students, and (c) Students having High and Low Academic Self-Concept: South Australia and Queensland (t – tests of differences)

Attitudes and Motivations	*Individual Attributes*					
	Sex[a]		*Achievement*[b]		*Self-Concept*[b]	
	S.A.	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*	*S.A.*	*Qld.*
Interest in Subjects Taken at School						
1 English	F	F				
2 Mathematics	M				H	H
3 Science		F	H	H	H	H
4 Social Sciences	F		H	H		H
5 Commercial	F	F				
6 Practical			L			
Relevance of Subjects Taken						
1 English	F	F				
2 Mathematics	M	M			H	H
3 Science	M		H	H	H	H
4 Social Sciences	F	F			H	H
5 Commercial	F					H
6 Practical	M		L			H
Class Behaviour		F			H	H
School Satisfaction	F	F	H	H	H	H

[a] F indicates Female > Male ($p < 0.05$)
M indicates Male > Female ($p < 0.05$)
[b] H indicates High > Low ($p < 0.05$)
L indicates Low > High ($p < 0.05$)

There are a number of sex differences. Females rate English and Commercial subjects more interesting than males. Females also perceive English and the Social Science subjects as more relevant for future occupations than do males. By contrast, males perceive mathematics as more relevant than do females. Finally, females are more satisfied with school than males.

Students in the High Achievement group rate both science and the social science subjects as more interesting, and see science as more relevant, and as well are more satisfied with school than the Low Achievement group.

Many significant differences result from comparison of the High and Low Academic Self-Concept groups. For instance, the High Academic Self-Concept group of students rate mathematics and science as more interesting, they recognize mathematics, science and the social science subjects as more relevant, they rate their behaviour in class as better, and they are more satisfied with school than are students in the Low Academic Self-Concept group.

Summary and Postscript

This study has sought to gauge students' attitudes to subjects studied at secondary school and student satisfaction with school. The study is based on samples of 16-year-old students in schools in South Australia and Queensland who were participating in a larger, longitudinal project conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The examination of relationships between variables using two separate state samples provided a firmer basis for statements about student interests and motivations than would have been possible had a single sample been employed.

Based on the two samples of students available, there would appear to be some potentially important differences between students and schools in South Australia and Queensland respectively. A smaller proportion of the students sampled in Queensland, for example, were attending state schools than in South Australia and there were more students, proportionally, in non-metropolitan schools in Queensland. There do not appear to be marked differences in the home backgrounds of students, as they have been measured in this study, between students in the two states. There are differences in level of general achievement and academic self-concept, which differences may be due to the holding power or retentivity of schools in South Australia and Queensland.

Interests in subjects studied at secondary school are very similar across the two states. Science is the most interesting subject, report the students, followed by Social Sciences, English and Mathematics. When students were asked how useful these subjects might be for future occupational choices, Mathematics and English moved to the top positions followed next by science and the social science subjects.

Examination was made of the degree that students consider school to be satisfying. Between 20 and 40 per cent of students appear moderately to very dissatisfied with school, a larger proportion of these being students in South Australia. Conversely, about 45 to 65 per cent of students appear moderately to very satisfied with school in the two states and, again, fewer of these are South Australian students.

Analysis of home background factors as these relate to student attitudes and motivations reveals, in general, that students from homes of high socioeducational level, high literacy resources and high parental encouragement are more interested in subjects like English, Social Sciences, and Science, see these subjects as more relevant, and are more satisfied with school than students from homes of low socioeducational level, low literacy resources and low parental encouragement.

There were few school factors that were at all consistently related to student attitudes and motivations. The one exception was the preference for social science subjects expressed by students in non-state schools in both South Australia and Queensland.

Certain individual attributes of students appeared to be highly related to student attitudes and motivations. There was a clear preference by female students for subjects like English and commercial subjects and these, together with social science subjects, were seen as most relevant for future occupations. Female students also expressed more satisfaction with school than did male students. Male students, on the other hand, found mathematics of more interest and relevance than did female students. In terms of achievement and academic self-concept, the high groups generally favoured mathematics, science, and social sciences, found these subjects more relevant, reported they were less often in trouble in class, and were more satisfied with school than low achievers and students with low academic self-concepts.

The results of the first phase of the South Australian Chapter project have, of necessity, been reported rather briefly. The researcher's task has been to analyse the data and present the findings. It is for the educational administrator and policymaker to tease out the implications and perhaps suggest future directions for research.

Some Comments on the Project

The analysis undertaken above provides us with a disturbing picture of the degree of satisfaction of students with secondary schooling and it poses some puzzling questions about students' attitudes to the subjects which they study in schools. Certainly those who work in schools must take such a study very seriously and accept the challenge to "tease out the implications" and "suggest future directions for research". For educational research is rather like an onion. Just as peeling back one skin of an onion you find another, and behind that another, so each educational research investigation discloses a further unseen layer of possibilities begging to be explored. By such discussions between educational researchers, teachers and administrators, new insights can be gained into the success or otherwise of educational programs and new approaches can be developed.

There are several matters arising from the study which particularly capture my interest, and I shall comment upon each in turn. Firstly, it needs to be stressed that the study was undertaken across two States but that it was not designed to be an indirect evaluation of the success of the two systems. As had been said, to treat it as providing material for comparative assessment would be to misuse and misunderstand the results. Secondly, I should like to point to the significance of the dates when the data was collected, and to some aspects of the educational and socio-economic structures in Queensland and South Australia which, while they certainly are broadly similar, also have some marked differences. The treatment of differences in school factors such as type, location and size, which differ substantially between the States, raises some interesting questions, as does that of sex-stereotyping of students. Finally I should like to emphasize the differences between what is statistically significant and what is educationally significant in relation to the findings.

Let us begin then with the representativeness of the samples. The original International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement sample was certainly above reproach. The follow-up sample, however, that is the residue of the original sample still in school at age 16, limits the value of the survey. There were 498 South Australian students and 354 Queensland students in the follow-up group, whereas in the original IEA sample the numbers in Queensland were at least equal to those in South Australia. Plainly this indicates that retention rates are higher in South Australia. This accords with Anderson's earlier study in 1978 which is referred to in the paper.

Although it is very unwise to draw simple conclusions from the fact that students remain at school, especially at a time of high unemployment, nonetheless it is probably not unreasonable to interpret retention rates as a very rough measure of school satisfaction. On this basis, one might conclude that a higher proportion of South Australian students felt a higher degree of school satisfaction that was the case among the Queensland students.

Such a conclusion however, is made even more questionable because of the two-tier secondary system in Queensland. It is more sensible for Queensland students to leave at the end of Year 10 if they do not propose to finish Year 12. Nevertheless, it is likely to be the low-achievers and students gaining low satisfaction from school who leave.

Let us now turn to the data which were collected in 1970 and were followed up in 1972. Any generalization to the present time on data collected at that time must be undertaken with the greatest care. Indeed, I believe that if one were to select a cohort of students which, more than any other, has experienced an excess of upheaval during their school life then it must surely be this one. Certainly this is true of South Australia. The school life of this student group has encompassed an extraordinary challenge of values. It is not an overstatement to say that education underwent a fundamental change during the time they attended school. Let us briefly recall a few of the events which they not only witnessed, but in which they actually participated, when schools became the battlegrounds where a large number of normative challenges were fought out.

While this cohort was in primary schools, there were deep-seated divisions over curriculum changes. In South Australia, this argument manifested itself most obviously in the introduction of courses in "new mathematics". So deep and bitter were the divisions which the innovations caused, that in South Australia a Royal Commission was set up to look into the matter, although the incident which sparked off the affair was played out among South Australian teachers in the Northern Territory.

For those whose memories do not go back that far, it can simply be said that the incident was a question of advice and support for teachers of the new mathematics in the Northern Territory. One must also say that the question was compounded by that of a principal's autonomy in making decisions about matters of concern to the school for which he was responsible. For this was also the time when the question of the autonomy, responsibility, and freedom of teachers and principals moved from the pages of reports written by critical overseas commentators and academics into the schools themselves. The outcome was that in various ways state education departments in Australia accepted that they could not and they should not dominate the day-to-day activities of teachers and students in the schools.

Inevitably, such dramatic and fundamental changes caused considerable turmoil, especially as the changes generally took the form of *ex cathedra* statements which granted the much sought after freedom and authority to schools but offered little advice on how that freedom and authority might be exercised.

When this group of students then moved into high school, there were more changes awaiting them. All secondary schools, in South Australia at least, became comprehensive. This bold move took place at a time when funds were short and when the provision of both buildings and teachers therefore lagged woefully behind need. But from the point of view of students, perhaps the most fundamental challenges were those which questioned the conventional codes of behaviour and discipline. Pamphleteers stood outside school gates and distributed hand-outs advocating student protest, while posters and underground material appeared on the walls of school rooms with suggestions about sexual and personal attitudes and behaviour in language which had never before been seen in classrooms.

Many parents and teachers were horrified, as were most educational administrators. Reaction was quick and action was drastic. Principals in Adelaide were given the phone number of the police operations room and were invited to make direct contact with police when they felt that the welfare of students was at risk because of the proximity of subversive elements, not only on, but near school property. Fears increased as hallucinogenic drugs became a matter of concern, and inevitably they were associated with those who were seen to be undermining the educational status quo.

At this time too, groups who had for so long been denied a voice in society suddenly exercised their rights to be heard. Many oppressed groups such as women, Aboriginals, homosexuals, and others took the opportunity to put their cases before students. Inevitably, this open discussion in schools, too, brought its own reaction from those who felt that schools should not permit issues of these sorts to be discussed. Each of us will have our own memories of those days; of protests arranged by students in a park to discuss their real and imagined grievances, with even the Education Department itself the scene of a protest, as educational administrators smelled the smoke of burning school ties and heard the strident voices of abusive secondary and tertiary students.

Could any group of students have lived through such an era and not be critical of the uncertain institutions which served them and which reeled under the impact of these sudden challenges?

If there is any one single incident which encapsulates the many incidents of that time it is the publishing of and public reaction to *The Little Red School Book*. And this in turn brings me to the assumption in the survey that the two educational and socio-economic structures in Queensland and South

Australia are broadly similar. If my memory serves me correctly, Queensland banned that book and South Australia did not. This is of some significance and indicates that there are quite fundamental attitudinal differences between the two communities, as represented by the governments of all political colours.

I do not want to consider the complex relationships between politics and education in detail but it does seem to me that two state governments which approach educational inquiries as differently as did South Australia in 1968 and Queensland in 1978 can scarcely be seen to share common assumptions about either the provision of education or the way in which decisions should be made about schools.

In 1968 the South Australian Government established an expert committee of inquiry comprising a distinguished academic, a Professor of Education from an interstate university, a businessman and a prominent judge. This committee differs markedly from that set up some 10 years later in Queensland by a government of the same colour.

Let us turn now to a consideration of the differences in such factors as type, location and size of schools. These vary substantially from State to State in this Commonwealth and, I believe, account for some differences in achievement and satisfaction. One would predict that satisfaction would be higher among fee-paying students in non-government schools and this is implied by the data. Furthermore, 14 per cent of total enrolments in South Australian secondary schools are non-government, while 27 per cent of total enrolments in Queensland are in non-government schools, but in the samples the non-government percentages are increased to 18 per cent and 39 per cent respectively, showing a higher retention rate in non-government schools.

Similarly, non-metropolitan schools, one would predict, should be associated with higher satisfaction although other factors may work against their higher retention as they would be smaller schools. Why does the data suggest otherwise? Another of the very useful things that the study points out I believe, is its support for other research evidence which suggests that

> While some signs exist that girls . . . would have to assert themselves more and make something of their own lives, the effects of their life experiences reveal themselves most clearly in the majority's more negative self-image, their passive acceptance of society's expectations for girls and the discrepancy between what they would like and what they actually expect to achieve. (Edgar, 1974 : 80.)

Mathematics is the subject which boys see as relevant for future occupations, while girls see English and commercial subjects as relevant. Such perceptions illustrate that subject choice along sex-stereotyped lines has already influenced students' career expectations by the time they reach 16 years of age. One must suspect that if students perceive commercial subjects as relevant then they already have decided to opt for a job in an office as a typist and that they do not aspire to a university course. Although girls appear more satisfied with schooling, other evidence (for example, the South

Australian Matriculation results) seems to indicate that as girls become more successful they

> . . . see themselves as being best at inter-personal forms of competence, a self-characterisation accompanied by deference to others, low self-confidence, high self-deprecation and a tendency to blame themselves for failings which could well be attributed, as it is by boys, to external limitations. (Edgar, 1974 : 79.)

This is the dilemma in which we find ourselves when we look at the socialization of girls. Perhaps they are more satisfied with their schooling because they expect less from it. They are satisfied and they conform to teacher and parental behaviour expectations because they lack the self-confidence to question the expectations others have of them. They may, too, be more satisfied with schooling because the female stereotype, which stresses among other things pacificity, conformity and deference, makes it more possible for them to acquiesce in the demands of teachers and schools than can boys.

This problem needs further examination and I believe that we should be looking into such things as:

1. Sex differences in secondary subject choice.
2. The influence that teacher attitudes towards sex differences in ability have on a student's achievement.
3. The influence of teachers as sex-role models for students.
4. Methods of improving the assertiveness and self-confidence of girls.
5. Methods of incorporating into the curriculum of schools information about the changing social role of both sexes.
6. The place of vocational training in schools.

Let me finish by discussing some aspects of the questionnaire and the significance of the findings about satisfaction for students. Without commenting at length on the questions put to respondents in the original questionnaire, one must ask if these are really likely to indicate satisfaction. For example, the questions to assess parental encouragement were as follows:

Parental Encouragement

Parental encouragement is a composite of four items in the student questionnaire:

1. When you talk at home, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   A Always or almost always insist that you speak correctly?
   B Sometimes insist that you speak correctly?
   C Let you speak how you please?
2. When you show your parents anything you have written, do they (*indicate one*):
   A Always or almost always check your spelling?
   B Sometimes check your spelling?
   C Hardly ever or never check your spelling?

3. In your spare time at home, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   - A Encourage you to read (books, not comics) as much as possible?
   - B Sometimes suggest you read (books, not comics)?
   - C Not mind if you never read?
4. When you get home from school, do your parents (*indicate one*):
   - A Always or almost always want to know how you have done?
   - B Sometimes inquire about your school work?
   - C Hardly ever or never ask you about school?

Are these questions likely to indicate whether parents encourage their children, or whether they are nagging hyper-critical parents who might well actually discourage their children? Question 4 obviously assumes that parents are at home when the student arrives home. Is such an assumption warranted? Does it suggest that the questionnaire might make certain assumptions about home life?

But what of the results? Aristotle once said, "Learning cannot be acquired without some pain". While I accept that the error of the past may have been to measure the amount of learning by the amount of pain inflicted, the error of the present might well be that we try to do away with pain altogether. This is not to say that schools need to be unhappy places. Indeed, a valid purpose of education is that students should learn how to be happy, both now and in the future. Generally this is learnt not from what they are taught but, I believe, more from how they are taught.

Nevertheless, we must be wary of evaluating satisfaction with schools with too much weight being given to students' perceptions of whether schools engender satisfaction, and whether subjects are interesting, relevant or useful. It is only probably at the extreme negative end that school satisfaction affects school performance. Hence differences which may be statistically significant may not be educationally significant. That is a matter which requires careful judgement.

We must also ask ourselves if the finding that students with high socio-educational backgrounds, literary resources and parental encouragement differ in their assessment of the interest and relevance of school subjects, suggests that these students should be treated differently. None of us would argue against each student being treated on an individual basis as far as possible, nor against the need for special programs and resources for the disadvantaged. On the other hand, few of us question the desirability and indeed the morality of treating students differently on the basis of membership of what amounts to a particular socio-economic group.

Finally, it seems to me that it may well be the case that the fundamental questioning of authority relationships in the community at large and within the schools which was occurring at the time that the data were collected had an important impact on the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that 16-year-olds felt about their schools. It might also be useful to bear in mind that those 16-year-olds who were boys were faced with the prospect of being called up in support of what was by then an unpopular war. The whole question of authority relationships as they affect students in schools may well be one of underlying skins of the onion which would merit further research investigation.

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THE MAD TESTS OR MEASURING THE NON-BASICS

A. W. Jones

When the Press wrongly interpreted the results of the First Report of Australian Studies in School Performance — Literacy and Numeracy in Australian Schools as a fall in standards and by implication of teaching in our schools, I determined to do something to refute these claims.

The studies were undertaken at a time when the percentage of an age group completing secondary education was at its highest, when the percentage of matriculants was the best ever, when the number of first and higher degrees gained in universities was at its highest and when schools were doing the best they ever had for the handicapped, Aborigines, migrants and students with special talents. I believe also it was a time when teaching techniques and attitudes of teachers in the classroom and the preservice education and inservice education of teachers had never been better and when music, art, drama and general culture and recreational and creative education were given more attention than ever before.

No one would deny that higher standards in basic intellectual skills need to be achieved to cope with modern living, but the self-righteous cries of the media that today's children could not do simple computation that in the past we could all do needed to be countered. But I had only subjective evidence and, of course, so did they. Mine was based on long experience in schools and with schools, as a teacher, administrator, examiner and observer not only in this country but in several others.

Of course I had evidence that such statements about spelling, reading and calculating had been made 50, 40, 30 and 20 years ago when some of the critics were in schools. I had indisputable evidence that at least Australian education had been successful in keeping almost all of 15-year-olds irrespective of intellectual ability at school instead of the meagre percentages of earlier years. Hence what could be considered a relative lowering of achievements in basic skills of an age group, but one of much different composition, was to me evidence of our success. By the press it was interpreted as our decline.

So in simplistic fashion I said to the Directorate of Research and Planning of the Education Department of S.A.: "Devise a testing program for the totality of our education process not only for the 3 R's but for all the other things we do in schools to make whole persons out of our students. We shall test two age groups now and then in 5 years' time and compare the results. I don't want a measure that shows Jimmy is better than Jane but an instrument that can give a total comparative measure of change in educational achievement over a span of years in accordance with the philosophy of education held in S.A."

Well the Directorate toiled, debated and discussed my proposition and then asked that I put my proposition to them at a half-day conference. The outcome was that they told me the periodic testing of the 3 R's was a national task in which they would co-operate with A.C.E.R. or E.R.D.C. but not take the initiative. In connection with what I had dubbed the "non-intellectual" achievements of schooling they could either devise a pencil and paper set of tests in Music, Art and Drama which would in some manner measure the adequacy, achievement, and climate of such matters in S.A. schools at different times, or adapt I.E.A. questionnaires on knowledge and attitudes on civic matters. We chose the former.

I had hoped that the tests would have been given to a random sample of 10-year-olds and 14-year-olds as were the A.C.E.R. literacy and numeracy tests. However, the Committee set up decided on a random sample of Year 9 and Year 11 students partly because this allowed them to devise, trial, revise, administer and comment on the results and report to me before my retirement, for which I was exceedingly grateful.

I was grateful to the independent schools who allowed us to trial the tests, as they were intended to be base-line data for comparing "arts achievement" in S.A. Government Schools over a period of years.

The Music, Art, Drama Tests were multiple-choice tests taking about a normal class period in a secondary school to administer. About 40 per cent of the questions tested specific knowledge and the other questions endeavoured to measure attitudes, interests and tastes in the arts as well as students' impressions of what they gained from school experience in music, art and drama.

The tests were given to 840 students, 420 from metropolitan high schools and 420 from country high schools randomly selected with equal numbers from Year 9 and Year 11. This sample of course, would not represent a State sample as two-thirds of Year 9 and Year 11 students attend Metropolitan Government high schools and not 50 per cent as in the samples tested.

Some of the test items were:

Art

Batik is a type of

metal
cloth
silver
paint

All high school students should have some courses in art and some courses in craft.

strongly agree
agree
disagree
strongly disagree

How likely are you to visit an art gallery after you leave high school?

very unlikely
unlikely
likely
very likely

Music

Which one of the following instruments is part of the woodwind family?

clarinet
French horn
bass trombone
harp

How often do you *listen* to music by yourself?

often
seldom
hardly ever
never

Tick the appropriate boxes for each of the statements.

	This is available in my school	*This is not available in my school*	*I would probably take part in this activity if it were available*
(a) Instruction in playing musical instruments			
(b) A school chorus			
(c) A school band or orchestra			
(d) School excursions to music performances (concerts of various types, operas, musicals, etc.)			
(e) A place in school where, during my free time, I can listen to music			
(f) Tapes and records of music which can be borrowed from the school library			
(g) An elective course in which you listen to music and learn about various types of music and composers			
(h) An elective course in which you compose and perform music for fairly simple instruments (drums, recorders, chime bars, bush basses, various types of whistles, jugs and bottles)			

Drama

An opera is a play in which the actors

dance
sing
speak lines of poetry
talk French or Italian

Have you had classes in drama in primary school?

YES
NO

If you ticked Yes, please answer the following questions:

A. Do you think your classes in drama helped you improve your ability to talk with other people?

YES
NO

B. Do you think your classes in drama increased your self-confidence?

YES
NO

C. Have your drama classes helped you understand other people?

YES
NO

D. Do you think that the drama classes helped to bring your class together in a closer group?

YES
NO

Make believe you are asked to take *two* (2) of the following elective courses. All the electives meet for 2 hours, once a week for one term. Which two would you take? Write "1" for your first choice and "2" for your second choice.

Public speaking (learning how to prepare and deliver a speech to an audience)
mime
ballroom dancing
ballet
creative dancing
creative drama (no productions for an audience — students make up scenes, act them out, discuss the scenes)
production drama (putting on a play for an audience)
production musical (putting on a musical play for an audience)
a combination creative dance — creative drama course
speed reading
gymnastics
fitness training
pottery making
jewellery making

Well this should be the end of the story until 5 years' time, when the tests will be administered again, but the researchers came up with some interesting findings on analysis of the data from one administration of the tests.

Apart from my aim of comparative testing of "non-basics" some years apart the researchers came up with subsidiary aims:

(1) To note differences between metropolitan and country responses.

(2) To gain some impressions from analysis of answers to specific questions on the Arts.

(3) To examine differences in responses from Year 9 and Year 11.

(4) To provide data to assist the Education Department to keep the public informed about aims and outcomes of schooling.

Differences between Metropolitan and Country

Music

On the *"knowledge" questions* metropolitan students outscored country students except in the question about the person most responsible for the interpretation of music, i.e. tempo, loudness and softness of an orchestra, in which country Year 11 students outscored metropolitan Year 11 students. Although metropolitan students seem to know more facts about music some of the differences disappear by Year 11.

Concerning *musical interest and courses,* over 90 per cent of the metropolitan students claimed that instrumental instruction was available in their school whereas slightly under 60 per cent made a similar claim in country high schools. There is other evidence to show that country high schools are less well served in music than metropolitan high schools.

Art

On the "knowledge" items metropolitan students outscore country students.

The questions on What is a mosaic? and What were Rembrandt and Hals? showed significant differences in favour of the metropolitan students in both Year 11 and Year 9.

On the interest items, there does not seem to be appreciable difference, although metropolitan Year 11 students have a slightly higher regard for art education than their country counterparts.

Drama

On "knowledge" items differences between metropolitan and country students were insignificant.

Again on questions about interests and courses there was a high level of understanding of the aims of drama classes with a slight bias in favour of metropolitan students.

Metropolitan students' answers indicated that slightly more of them regard themselves as self-confident than do country students.

Some Impressions from Answers to Specific Questions

Music

Approximately 30 per cent of the students claimed that they played a musical instrument.

Slightly more than half the sample claimed that they would like to learn to play a musical instrument in school.

About 45 per cent of the students claimed to have had no classes in music in primary school. This is a surprising result, and, although we can speculate on what the students construed as "music classes", the range and depth of music education in primary schools may need reviewing.

The answers to the question of spending $20 on record or tape albums showed that up to 13 per cent of the Year levels chose to purchase an album of Recorder Music indicating the influence of the widespread use of recorders in schools.

Art

The comment of the researchers on the "knowledge" questions on art was that our students are neither noteworthy savants nor ignorant ockers.

Outside school, over half the students draw, slightly less than 20 per cent paint, and about 25 per cent carve or make models.

About 90 per cent of the students agree that all high school students should have some courses in art and craft. It appears as though art is enjoyed.

About 50 per cent claim that they are likely to visit an Art Gallery after they leave school; it appears that their art courses have an influence on their post-school interests.

Drama

About 60 per cent claim to have had drama classes in primary schools. As with "music classes" this seems a gross underestimate, but the result was extremely consistent, and 40 per cent of the sample claim not to have had drama classes in primary school.

There is general agreement about the benefits of the primary courses in drama. About 50 per cent think it helped them talk to others, about 65 per cent think it increased their self-confidence and a slightly smaller percentage think that it helped them understand others.

There was strong agreement that primary school drama brought the class into a closer group. Drama in both primary and secondary schools was regarded by almost 90 per cent as enjoyable.

About 45 per cent agree that drama does not get enough emphasis in their high schools.

Hence at least half the students claim some very practical socialising benefits from drama classes such as talking to others, self-confidence, understanding others and increased class cohesion particularly in primary school. Secondary drama, which 75 per cent of the students claim to have had, seemed slightly less effective in these regards.

Differences in Responses from Year 9 and Year 11 Students

Music

On the music knowledge questions Year 11 students had consistently higher scores than Year 9. However on 5 of 12 such items there was no significant difference between Year levels.

There is modest evidence to suggest that musical taste changes between Years 9 and 11. ABBA is less popular among Year 11 than Year 9 and Brahms goes up from 3 per cent at Year 9 to 5 per cent at Year 11.

Art

Year 11 students outscored Year 9 students on all 12 of the "knowledge questions" on Art.

There is evidence to suggest that artistic taste of students "matures" between Years 9 and 11. For instance 80 per cent of Year 11 said that artists should experiment with collages made by pasting paper on canvas and then painting on the surface compared with 66 per cent of Year 9.

Drama

Year 11 outscored Year 9 students on all "knowledge" items on drama.

On questions about courses, interest in drama and benefits from drama classes there was no significant difference in responses from Year 9 and Year 11.

About 75 per cent claim to have read a play at Year 9; this increased to 90 per cent at Year 11.

To Provide Data to Assist the Education Department to Keep the Public Informed about Aims and Outcomes of Schooling

The major purpose of the tests was to establish baseline data on music, art and drama outcomes in schools: what the standards lobby would call the "non-basics". Until the tests are administered again in later years we cannot give any comparative results.

Nevertheless students' perception of the desirability and benefits of these courses, their honest reporting of the efficiency of instruction in these fields and the difference in response between metropolitan and country students and between Years 9 and 11 give us data on which to reflect and even review developments in these fields.

The value of activities in music, art and drama appears to be appreciated by the students, yet 45 per cent contended that they had no music classes in primary school. We are proud of what is done in art in South Australian schools and 90 per cent of the students said all high school students should do some, yet is 50 per cent likely post-school attendance at Art Galleries good enough? The S.A. Education Department has provided extraordinary opportunities through the Festival Theatre, Theatre 62 and the S.A. Theatre Company, the Youth Drama Group and Come Out Festivals for both participating in and observing dramatic performances, yet 40 per cent of our sample claim not to have had any such experience in primary school, and this was the case for both Year 11 and Year 9 students, and indeed 45 per cent agree that drama does not get enough emphasis in their high schools.

Students' preferences in leisure activities indicate that rock concerts, drive-in movies, football and motor cycle races are far more popular than plays, ballet or opera. But there are signs of a shift in preferences from Year 9 to Year 11.

Forty-five per cent of students considered that drama was not sufficiently emphasised in their high school, yet when asked their preference for elective courses, 7 of which were clearly in the drama field and 7 in fields of fitness training, pottery making, jewellery making and gymnastics, the non-drama electives won handsomely; not one of the drama electives gaining as much as 10 per cent of first preferences.

Information given to educators and to the S.A. public in correct perspective, debated, discussed criticised — for I have never ignored or abhorred criticism; my objections have been the critics' solutions, viz., a return to the past — can move education forward. For education is a co-operative affair, a total community enterprise — but the community cannot help if they do not know the facts.

In developing education we cannot wait for the second testing to get comparable data 5 years hence. We must push ahead but not blindly; perhaps we can put to ourselves and others some of the questions that were answered by Year 9 and Year 11 students and see if in retrospect we or they could give as satisfactory answers at those ages.

Could we have identified a Gothic Cathedral? Would your out-of-school activities have included collage making, carving and model-making? Would you have had firm opinions on art and architecture in your school days? Would you have identified Rembrandt and Hals? Would you have listened to music by yourself? Would you have rated your ability to talk to people as high? Would you have considered your confidence with others high?

If we can be introspective and answer these questions honestly we will decide whether standards have fallen or not.

Postscript

How Do These MAD Tests Fit in with School-Based Curriculum Evaluation?

First of all the philosophy of the school would have to be in tune with the concept of developing complete persons, and not just intellectually skilful people.

You will need to believe that the arts have something to contribute to the development of complete persons; that they can offer opportunities for children to create; that they can foster values, interests and discipline which are essential for full intellectual, social and emotional development.

You will need to believe that schooling is not only a preparation for life but is a part of life that should be as satisfying to each individual as we can make it.

You will need to have a balanced view of curriculum and take note of what other testing tells you about the "intellectual" achievements in your school. You will need to see excursions to the Festival Theatre as educationally valuable and not as just fun and games, and release from classroom toil.

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You will need to take note of the locality of your school, whether metropolitan or rural, whether affluent or deprived.

You will need to take note of what the answers to the content or knowledge questions revealed.

You will get valuable information from the answers to those questions that attempted to assess changes in attitudes, interests and tastes.

You will need to study the responses about courses in art, music and drama and what students felt they had or had not gained from them.

You would be wise to discuss all the results with your school community to increase their understanding and get their support for development of the curriculum.

But remember the aim of the tests was to get some kind of a measure of the state of the arts in the State schools now and see what changes will have occurred in, say, five years' time. Remember, too, that the results must be interpreted in relation to results achieved in tests of the "basic" intellectual skills.

What would be your evaluation of the curriculum if in 5 years' time the tests reveal that there has been a 5 per cent improvement in reading, writing, and number skills but development in the "arts" has declined by 5 per cent?

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND QUALITY IN EDUCATION

MAL HEWITSON

This report from the Sub-Conference on Educational Research is concerned not only with research in education but also with possible roles for The Australian College of Education in research activity. As the College has members from so many different areas of education most of the discussion has been retained because it relates to researchers and practitioners in education whether they are members of the College or not. Dr. Hewitson's conclusion, "Implications for the College" has, however been omitted because its recommendations were of a specific rather than a general nature. It is worth recording that they have been very carefully considered by the Council of the College and the most important result is that a Working Party has been established to consider the role of the College in Research Activity.

Introduction

In his address to the Founders' Convention, Dr. D. H. Russell (then Professor of Education, University of California) discussed the responsibilities of the College as a professional organisation. With regard to the problem of stimulating research, he said:

> "Perhaps the College as an organisation can work with the Federal Government, some large industries or foundations to obtain research grants. But every one of us here can work on knowing and disseminating research information. Perhaps I am being too specific but how about a goal of getting every teacher in Australia to know three or four research studies in the field of his particular interest? I suspect the College has unlimited opportunities in relation to research."[1]

Among the objects for which the College was formed, the following is directly concerned with the role of the College in relation to research:

> To promote and encourage educational research and investigation of any kind, to provide facilities for training of persons engaged in such research or investigation and instruction in, and publicity of the results and purposes thereof.[2]

While it is likely that the College has not in fact had the "unlimited opportunities" in relation to research which Russell foresaw, at the same time it may be that the College could have made more opportunities itself to be involved in promotion, training and dissemination activities associated with educational research in Australia. This is not to deny, of course, that the College has very effectively promoted, facilitated and publicized a number of research projects, large and small, over the years.

Thus the challenge which faced the Research Sub-Conference was two-fold. First, how can educational research improve quality in education in the broad Australian context? Second, in what ways can the College involve itself in issues pertaining to educational research so that research is effectively utilized in the fuller attainment of College objectives?

It was in this context that the following lead speakers introduced a series of specific topics for further discussion:

- Dr. John Lawry, President of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE):

  "What steps can be taken to improve the training of researchers and the quality of research in Australia?"
- Mr. Graham Streets, Chairman of the Disseminations Sub-Committee, Education Research and Development Committee (ERDC):

  "What steps can be taken to improve the dissemination of research information to educational practitioners, and, through educational research, the quality of educational practice?"
- Dr. John Keeves, Director, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER):

  "To what extent is rationalisation of the total Australian educational research effort desirable? Can co-ordination be improved?"
- Dr. Don Anderson, Professorial Fellow, Education Research Unit, Australian National University:

  "What can be done to improve dialogue and co-operation among major educational research-initiating bodies?"
- Dr. Ron Browne, Vice-President, Australian College of Education:

  "What role can the Australian College of Education play in initiating and/or fostering research in education as a College contribution to the development of policy, planning and people, with particular reference to its own members?"

This chapter, therefore, summarises what the various speakers had to say, and records the salient ideas which were generated during the discussions which followed. First, however, it is necessary to agree on definitions of terms.

Definitions of Research and Development

The following definitions of Research and Development are taken from PROJECT SCORE[3]:

RESEARCH:	Original investigation designed to increase the general knowledge or understanding of the subject studied, divided into basic and applied research.
BASIC RESEARCH:	Original investigation with the primary aim of a more complete knowledge or understanding of the subject under study.
APPLIED RESEARCH:	Original investigation with the primary aim of solving recognised practical problems.

EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT: The stage beyond research where the systematic use or adaption of its results is directed towards the production of new or improved products, processes, systems or methods.

These definitions convey the notion that R & D activities are to be identified by an appreciable element of novelty, combined with a potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for the stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) to be recognisably increased.

BASIC RESEARCH may be subdivided into two categories, pure and oriented. PURE basic research aims to satisfy scientific curiosity. ORIENTED basic research aims to identify principles in the solution of problems of present or potential scientific, economic or social interest.

With regard to educational research in particular, Fattu[4] states that educational research appears to be willing to assume responsibility for all phases of scholarly activity associated with the educative process.

It thus includes:

(a) Carefully designed experimental studies that provide a critical test of current or proposed practices. Other types of studies, including surveys, may also contribute usefully when new approaches or techniques are used, but mass collections of data, not illumined by some guiding ideas, should be discouraged.

(b) Contributions of a theoretical, historical, philosophical or integrative type as scholarly activities. Conceptualisations of areas of research to provide a general rationale or framework for studies that encourage a wise utilisation of research effort.

(c) Critical reviews of research literature and summaries of issues and problems.

(d) Applied research, focused on local practices and policies, that is planned to stimulate interest in more fundamental studies, as well as to develop the school staff and illumine some immediate problem. This activity would be directed toward becoming operations or logistics research. The writing of textbooks, preparation of instructional materials, and administration of a school seem to be relevant activities when impelled by more basic considerations than those of the immediate situation.

Fattu concludes that educational research seems to have rather fluid boundaries: "One is forced to the banal, if not actually tautological, operational definition that educational research appears to be what educational researchers do."

A number of commonly used descriptors of research activities are also to be noted:

Decision-Oriented Research: Assists decision-making on policy and practice.

Conclusion-Oriented Research:	Describes and explains past, present or possible future states of reality.
Supply-Oriented Research:	Motivated by researcher needs for involvement, qualification, etc.
Demand-Oriented Research:	Motivated by problem solution needs.
Mission-Oriented Research:	Demand-oriented research.
Discipline Research:	Investigates theoretical issues in specific disciplinary areas.
Policy Research:	Contributes to policy before the formulation stage.

Strong reservations were expressed by Sub-conference members about definitions which tie Social Science research to Physical Science models. Furthermore, although distinctions such as those listed above may be helpful in clarifying the nature of the research being carried out, Keeves[5] argues that they can be counterproductive if held to too firmly. In the case of decision-oriented or policy research, for example, allocation of research resources in accordance with priorities associated with policy questions could ultimately lead to a rejection of theory in favour of one-shot policy studies. However, not only should research in education be grounded in an identified theoretical context, thus helping to inform theory, but it should also be seen as inter-disciplinary in nature, adopting an eclectic approach to the use of the theory and methodology of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, Economics, Demography and History for more penetrating insights into that part of reality labelled education.[6]

Thus while the definitions proposed above were not found completely acceptable, they nevertheless provided a starting point for the purposes of the discussions which were to follow.

The Training of Education Researchers

In his opening address, Dr. John Lawry[7] stressed the crucial importance, for improvement in the preparation of researchers and the quality of research, of developing conditions conducive to the fostering of education research. Such conditions include:

1. A national education research policy.
2. Greater coordination of research activities at all levels and in all institutions.
3. The provision of firm funding commitments to permit the forward planning of projects and the institutional support systems required.
4. The development of a career structure for education researchers.
5. The general encouragement of research as a significant factor in education systems.

6. The further development of courses and other means for the preparation of researchers and for their continuing professional growth and experience.

Although Lawry touched on each of these items, subsequent discussion focused mainly on:

> . . . the fundamental grass-roots issues of creating a research consciousness and involvement amongst classroom teachers and administrators.

Lawry observes that the beginnings of a "research consciousness" are to be found in the general preparation of teachers, in such areas as curriculum development, foundation studies and classroom and school studies, where research has provided both theoretical and empirical contributions to knowledge. Furthermore, the next phase of development follows automatically since classroom teachers normally employ research methodology in their way of thinking about their problems. When, for example, a teacher identifies a problem, considers alternative solutions, tries one out and evaluates its success, he/she is testing an hypothesis, using the present class as an experimental group and a previous class as a control group.

On the other hand, it has been said that a considerable research effort has been devoted to finding out what teachers already know at the common-sense level. Again, it is argued that the researcher is often seen as an "outsider" whose penetration into the classroom inhibits teachers. Finally, the research report may be beyond the teachers' interpretative powers and/or may be judged to be irrelevant to the real problems and practical issues which confront them. The net effect is that a so-called "anti-intellectualism" characterises the attitude of many practitioners towards educational research.

In order to counter any such break-down of relationships between researchers and practitioners, it is clear that research with teachers is likely to be more effective than research on teachers. In other words, the more the teacher is used as a collaborator in classroom or school research activities, the more effect research is likely to have on teaching or administrative practice. In particular, it behoves education researchers to listen to the potential research audience before beginning the research project, and to maintain audience involvement at as high a level as possible throughout the project, including the stage of evaluative feedback by the audience once the project is complete and any change initiated.

As implied in the previous paragraph, it is the practitioner, not the researcher, who is the effective agent for changing educational practices at the school level. Hence, the most appropriate preparation for teachers to become users of research goes beyond the collaborative involvement stage to active engagement in research. That is, teachers are likely to appreciate research more fully if they do some themselves. Small-scale action research studies could be carried out by the vast majority of teachers, especially if they have access to appropriate expertise in the early stages, i.e., when formulating the theoretical framework, the research questions to be asked and the research method to be employed.

Research experience of this kind may lead to greater insights on the part of teachers and a more willing acceptance of educational practice, thus raising the level of research consciousness of which Lawry speaks.

But although the one-shot case study is a legitimate research methodology, ethnographic data need to be reported in rich detail if patterns are to emerge from a number of such studies. The difficulties, then are two-fold: first, the writing up of detailed observations is no easy matter; the second, although $n = 1$ in each individual case, it is only if a number of studies are structured along parallel lines that a solid background of understanding will be built up and enough evidence accumulated to make generalizations possible.

There are dangers in action research, too, which should be heeded. For example, teachers in their capacity as action researchers may be exploited by people pushing a particular line. Or teachers may become dismayed by what they find to be consequences of their own teaching behaviours. Again, the implementation of desirable change as a result of the case-study may be beyond the teachers' resources, whether at the personal or the system level. There is also the possibility that unintended and undesired outcomes may be generated by the research activity. And, finally, it is patently clear that educational research cannot resolve those problems which are rooted in differences in personal value-systems.

These difficulties, dangers and limitations notwithstanding, the case for small-scale research studies by practitioners is a very strong one. It is regrettable that the number of such studies being reported has recently dropped, since it indicates that the most appropriate preparation of classroom teachers as final users of educational research is even more underutilized than before, and this mode of bridging the gap between research and practice is contributing less than it might in terms of improving the quality of schooling.

Educational research, of course, is concerned with much more than relationships within the school context, and the preparation of professional researchers draws on a much wider range of disciplines than preparing teachers to be competent users of research findings.

Turning, therefore, to educational research training in general, Lawry[8] underlines the fact that improvement in the preparation of the professional researcher — along the lines suggested by Radford[9] — and improvement in the quality of educational research are interdependent. He notes the need for different approaches in the preparation of research scholars, depending on both the areas of specialization (historical, sociological, philosophical, psychological, etc.) and the individual strengths and preferences of the researcher (for example, for basic or applied research, and so on). Thus the general pattern of preparation, according to Lawry, would normally include:

(a) Initial academic preparation and professional preparation and experience. Although professional qualifications and experience may be desirable, they may not be essential in all cases;

(b) Further academic preparation with appropriate work in research methodology. This may be coursework and research projects/thesis, or research methodology undertaken as part of the research project/thesis;

(c) Continuing research experience and professional/research updating through special post-graduate courses, seminars, and research training sessions. These activities should be subject to continuing revision and upgrading;

(d) Specific training/experience should be provided for in emerging areas of research interest, especially where the needs are not met by existing programs. The specific experience might include internship arrangements, overseas training, or visits for training sessions in Australia by overseas experts.

Such a pattern would be evidence of improvement in the general conditions fostering a climate of acceptance and awareness of the role of educational research in its efforts to significantly improve education systems, their policies and their practices.

The Dissemination of Educational Research

Mr. Graham Streets[10] introduced the many problems surrounding the dissemination of research by noting that problems arise both from the nature of educational research and from the differing attitudes and expectations of researchers and their audience. It is widely appreciated that issues in education are often not amenable to hard-nose experimental investigation, that adequate control of the multitude of variables impinging on the subjects under study requires complex research designs, and that statistically significant differences may be relatively unimportant in their effect. Apart from deficiencies in the study itself, interpretation of the data and the way it is reported to the target audience may also be sources of inadequacy. The amount of research which remains unreported is, of course, not known.

Streets identifies at least five possible audiences of educational research: other researchers, classroom teachers, policy-makers at school, system or national level, the general public, and the media. If dissemination is to be satisfactorily achieved, i.e., if users are to be able to make a meaningful interpretation of the final report, the audience at which the report is aimed needs identification before the study begins, as different ways of informing different audiences about the results and implications of the research are both desirable and necessary.

The main modes of dissemination of research include the annual reports of such research bodies as ACER, ERDC, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), the Australian Research Grants Commission (ARGC), etc.; publications such as the ACER and ERDC research report series; reports in learned journals and professional association newsletters; workshops, seminars and major conferences; and directories containing research abstracts such as the ERIC system and the *Directory of Education Research and Researchers in Australia.*[11]

If research is to inform educational practice, however, the dissemination problem involves not only the communication of research to a research-conscious and receptive audience (as discussed in the previous section), but also the actual application of the outcomes of research by practitioners. The provision of information alone may not effect changes in educational practice: the powerful forces of ideologies, traditions and habits may all be ranged against the implementation of change. It must be reiterated that the resolution of value conflicts so generated lies beyond the reach of research per se.

Discussion of the receptivity of the target audience to research findings raises some interesting issues. For example, there is a considerable degree of self-selection into professional research careers in which certain personality factors may play a significant part. The professional education researcher typically enters the halls of academe, and the researcher role itself may encourage idealization of the world. To counteract any such tendency, academic researchers should return to the classroom from time to time to maintain close touch with the world of reality.

At the same time, practitioners may be asking too much of educational researchers when they demand a simplistic translation of a research report into layman's language. The danger here is that the research is set in a theoretical framework (even if the framework has not been made explicit), and to make use of the findings without an understanding of the theoretical context undergirding the study could lead to inappropriate applications of the results. The theory which informs the research must also inform the practice. However, a case can be made for persons with journalistic and editorial skills to write up research for an intelligent lay audience, without the distortion which sometimes occurs when results are reported in the popular press or on television.

Another variant which those concerned with the dissemination of research could profitably use is the short seminar in which both researchers and practitioners are brought together. An abstract of the research report is a useful document to circulate to participants before the seminar begins. Seminars structured in this way have been found to foster highly successful two-way communication, bridging the researcher-practitioner gap. In addition, the interaction between the groups may generate important leads for the direction which future research should take when attention is focused on the question, Where do we go from here?

Finally, Streets[12] puts forward the general proposition in regard to the dissemination of research that education researchers must justify their activities to a wider community than they now reach if they are to continue to secure funds for their work. Complacency in this respect could be disastrous for the future of educational research, which, like other areas of expenditure, is ultimately accountable for the funds invested in it. Herein lies the urgency for adequate dissemination processes, which themselves may need improving through experimentation with a number of different approaches, styles and formats.

Rationalisation of educational research in Australia

In his discussion on rationalisation of the total Australian educational research effort, Dr. John Keeves[13] argues forcibly against complete central determination of research priorities. According to Keeves, the dangers associated with such a policy relate to the establishment of guidelines, the determination of priorities, and the implementation of decisions which check the development of one project at the expense of another, or lead to the transfer of a project from one researcher in one institution to another working in a different institution. The possibility of faulty judgement arises at each of these three levels, especially as education research and development is subject to fashions in both topics and methods.

Basing an alternative policy on Radford's[14] work, Keeves puts forward the following suggestions:

- the common sense and perceptiveness of the workers should be backed, in the belief that no major area will suffer;
- more communication between workers in the same area could and should be fostered as one means of ensuring that any necessary coordination and rationalisation of effort will take place voluntarily;
- particular areas in which those concerned with policy require better data are not likely to arise suddenly; early advice to the research community about likely need for data ought to be regarded as automatic;
- unless the research community itself has a large say in establishing priorities and agreeing to them, and these are fairly stable over time, there are undoubtedly problems in:
  - — preparing adequately those to be concerned with research and development;
  - — getting work other than the stated priorities completed, with the necessary follow-up;
  - — creating commitment to the kind of program or series of studies that will arise from the priorities;
- closer association than now exists between research worker and the classroom practitioner is required to keep the former closely informed about the problems and uncertainties of practice.

Such an approach, writes Keeves, would be less susceptible to fashion and more likely to generate long term, high quality educational research.

However, it needs to be pointed out that certain important areas of research have, in fact, been neglected over a long period — for example, early childhood research and research into technical and further education. The question arises, therefore, of how research in relatively neglected areas can be stimulated without funding bodies directing research grants to them, and without restriction on State Department of Education or individual researcher initiative. A further complication exists if it is accepted that society has legitimate claims on where and how the limited resources available for educational research are expended. For example, the extent to which individual researchers seek funds bcause they must meet "publish or perish" needs rather than because they are committed to meeting society's educational needs and, through research, influencing educational practice, has yet to be assessed.

To overcome such problems, it is possible to conceive of research funding bodies as having two roles, the one meeting educational needs on behalf of society by directing the research effort into priority areas, the other meeting individual initiative needs by encouraging the submission of research projects across the whole education spectrum. ERDC, for example, has established a number of Priority Area Advisory Groups, whose work includes both within-area balancing of the research effort and scanning the horizon for emerging future needs. Hence Advisory Groups recommend the commissioning of specific research projects. But ERDC also continues to fund research proposals initiated by individuals over a wide range of non-priority research areas. The one danger here would appear to be the possibility that a greater and greater percentage of funds could, over time, be directed into priority area projects.

Keeves[15] believes that a high degree of voluntary cooperation and collaboration within the research community and the provision of multiple alternatives in both sources of funding and locations where research can be carried out constitute the most appropriate policy for Australia to follow. He offers the following steps which should be taken in the interests of greater collaboration amongst educational researchers:

1. An open approach to publication of research studies of a satisfactory quality, without modification or suppression because the report is critical of current practice.
2. Facilitating the search of published research, through a more complete and comprehensive Australian Education Index, through the inclusion of abstracts in the AUSINET system, and by Australia linking into the EURONET system.
3. Greater efforts to establish a national Data Banking system, with ready access to educational research data files, appropriately documented and formatted.
4. Wider dissemination of thesis research findings by updating of the bibliographic listing published earlier and circulation of thesis abstracts, and by more use of microfilm or microfiche.
5. Further development of ERDC's planning, funding and dissemination activities.

Each item listed may be seen to contribute to an overall rational approach to the development of educational research. According to Keeves, therefore, rationalisation of the research effort should be promoted in terms of openness, collaboration and cooperation among all those involved in research activity.

Dialogue and Cooperation among research-initiating bodies

Despite the views expressed in the previous section, some researchers may be of the opinion that the beginnings of a national centralized educational research policy are discernible. Dr. Don Anderson,[16] however, emphasises the wide diversity of purpose and range of institutions embracing people engaged in educational research. A rough count of institutions with a minimum annual research budget of $100,000 and with members having a substantial interest in or commitment to educational research reveals that they number at least one hundred and ten, excluding professional associations, such as AARE and The Australian College of Education, and excluding governmentsponsored inquiries into various aspects of education. Given, also, the existence of differences between the education systems themselves and between government and non-government systems, Anderson concludes that the establishment of an education research policy blanketing the total national research effort is just not a feasible proposition.

In discussing dialogue and cooperation among this array of research bodies, Anderson warns against overlooking the informal networks of communication frequently used by education researchers, such as personal correspondence, informal meetings, visits, and so on. At the same time, he believes that more dialogue and cooperation is both necessary and desirable. First, there is much research undertaken of which the research community, even specialists in the same general area, are quite unaware. Second, although secrecy and ambition may be motivating factors for the ego-satisfaction of researchers during their research, an end-requirement that they publish a report may need to be enforced by sponsoring bodies in the interests of better dissemination. Third, cooperation between sponsoring bodies in terms of funding, organization and administration of research is essential if any major national study is to be undertaken. For example, a longitudinal study of a particular cohort would be beyond the resources of any one body. One institution might take the initial running, of course, but major studies cutting across State boundaries require high levels of coordinated effort.

Furthermore, two spin-off benefits may accrue from such cooperation: in the first place, the personal efforts of the individual researcher may be stimulated and improved by collaboration in a larger team effort; and in the second place, the emergence of "Centres of excellence" in the various specialist research areas may be thus fostered.

Turning to policy-oriented research in particular, Anderson notes the desirability of bringing researchers and policy-makers into closer working relationships. He points out that policy-makers must make decisions on the basis of the best information available to them within a specified time limit. Although research information is only one of a number of factors taken into account when decisions are made, relevant research findings may reach policy-makers too late to influence them. Furthermore, the implications of educational research may take time to mature. Hence greater cooperation between researchers and policy-makers may enable more lead time to be given to researchers working in the area of policy development and analysis. As in the case of researchers working with teachers in action research, if researchers have more dialogue with policy-makers, it is likely to lead to greater insights on the part of each group into the real problems and perspective of the other group.

The Australian College of Education membership includes professional researchers, policy-makers at all levels of education, and teachers. The College is thus in a unique position to promote dialogue and cooperation among research-initiating bodies and to bring educational researchers, policy-makers and practitioners into closer and more rewarding relationships. The following section, then, focuses on the role of the College in regard to educational research.

The Role of the College in Initiating and Fostering Educational Research

In his paper on the role of The Australian College of Education in educational research, Dr. Ron Browne[17] presents two alternative positions which the College could adopt. The first perspective accepts that lack of time and lack of funds prevent the College playing a substantial research role through utilization of its membership or through the commissioning of studies. This is not to undervalue the research contribution which the College has made during its nineteen years of growth, as demonstrated in the following list of Chapter and Council research reports:

Title of Report	*Chapter*	*Year*
In-service education for Queensland teachers	Queensland	1969
Community attitudes to education in Queensland		1978
Education of sub-normal children	N.S.W.	1971
Automation and education		1972
Priorities in Australian education		1973
Education for girls		1975
The education of aborigines	A.C.T.	1971
The transition from school to work including the place of T.A.F.E.		1976
A study of teacher resignations	S.A.	1971
Priorities and needs in education		1973
Student attitudes and motivations towards school: profile of secondary school students in S.A. and Queensland		1978
A third university in Victoria	Victoria	1961
Matriculation for several universities		1962
A survey of the televiewing habits of secondary school children in Greater Geelong, 1965. (Geelong Regional Group)		1966
Transition from secondary to university education		1967
Dual use of university facilities		1967
The problem of transition from primary to secondary education		1968
The education of girls and the employment of women		1971
Report of the migrant education committee		1973
Middle level courses		1973
Teaching a graduate profession		1973
Priorities in special education in Australia		1973

Council

Teachers in Australia	1965
Uniformity and diversity in Australian education as seen in the government schools on the Murray River border districts of N.S.W., S.A. and Victoria	1972

In addition to the above, the New South Wales Chapter is currently conducting a number of projects, including a replication of Queensland's "Community attitudes to education" study.

Browne's second perspective, however, implies a much expanded College role in relation to educational research. In brief, Browne proposes that the College should emphasise the appraisal and development of national education policies which would require appropriate research projects. He notes the developing role of principals and teachers as "applied researchers", and believes that the College should assist them in this role by providing support mechanisms, especially for the non-urban members of the College. He sees increasing possibilities for the College's publication, *Unicorn,* to be used in the dissemination of research findings, and feels that the College could further the cause of dissemination by the release of occasional papers on educational research. Again, the College could establish a register containing information on the research interests of members, whether as professional researchers, practitioner-researchers or users of research. The College could also be instrumental in fostering a research community (in Trow's sense of the term). Accordingly, it could take out membership of AUSINET on behalf of College research groups, and, in general, play a supporting role in establishing a reliable information base and in presenting alternative approaches in the determination of priorities and policies for education in Australia.

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9. Radford, W. C., op. cit.
10. Head, Department of Teacher Education, North Brisbane C.A.E., Kedron, Queensland. Interested readers may contact Mr. Streets for the full text of his paper.

11. A.G.P.S., Canberra, 1977.

12. See f. 10.

13. See f. 5.

14. Radford, W. C., op. cit.

15. See f. 5.

16. Professorial Fellow, Education Research Unit, Australian National University, Canberra.

17. Secretary, Australian Educational Council. Interested readers may contact Dr. Browne for the full text of his paper.

QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Reports from some Sub-conferences

As stated in the Introduction some of the sub-conferences followed the Search conference technique. The members of each sub-conference were those who were working in a particular field of education. From the reports it seems clear that the greatest benefit of the sub-conferences was the sharing of ideas and experiences in formal and informal discussions. In what follows, therefore, there are some quite short reports. They are, however, included because the conclusions which were reached by participants after their deliberations are important for consideration by others in the teaching profession.

We begin with the report of the Sub-conference on Philosophical Issues which concentrates on the question of values and the responsibility of individual schools in this field.

PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

The question of values seemed fundamental to talk of quality and this group elected at the start to give attention primarily to values. At the same time it seemed essential to test any conclusions by possibilities of implementation.

We began with an exploration of what each member of the group valued, testing those conditions — states of mind, qualities of character and states of affairs—which we wanted schools and other educational institutions to help to promote. At the end of this preliminary exercise the group was confronted with some seventy values, or words representing values, ranging from justice and love (at one extreme) to aggression (at the other). The group was trying to express what others valued as well as formulating ideals to which various members were individually committed.

In later sessions attempts were made to reduce this wide range of desired or desirable conditions to a manageable list of criteria in terms of which the qualities of educational practices and procedures might be tested. One broad distinction emerged: between values of the social order on the one hand, those of the individual on the other. In between, bridging the gap between the two as it were, was the value of survival of a distinctive unique individual or personal *self* in a given social order.

The group referred to the categories of social (or corporate) and personal goods as "core values". These core values were "tested" through sessions in which one separate group attempted implementation by constructing a school — considering staff, buildings and management, procedures and practices as ways of promoting or exemplifying the desired condition, while the other chose to consider implications for individual development. The core values so tested were formulated as follows:

1. Values of the social order: Beneficence, truth-seeking (and speaking). The first yielded criteria of quality such as respect for others, their persons and property, courtesy, care for the weak and, involved in all this, a recognition that beneficence in many cases meant pur-

suing the good of others as they see it, not imposing one's own ideals upon them. The second yielded criteria such as treatment of evidence, development of critical faculty, understanding various modes of discourse and courage. While courage was seen to be a quality necessary to all the values special consideration was given to the part it must play in truth-speaking and the connection between this and the learning environment.

2. Values of the person: discussion on these tended to focus on what it meant for a unique self or person to survive in society but time was spent also on the value of self-development with its implication for the development — and continuing education — of both teacher and student.

The following implications were noted and discussed:

1. The core-values must be agreed upon by a school and its "constituency", by parents, and other institutions and people who care for children. (Emphasis upon schools was regrettable but probably unavoidable, given the over-riding interests of this group.) Given agreement on such core-values as those listed above it was possible to recognize secondary, or instrumental values such as competitiveness which need not be upheld by every school nor indeed by all minority groups within the schools. (The group was made keenly aware of problems facing "multicultural" institutions.)
2. The core-values were not seen to require any one particular style of teaching or of overall planning. The so-called "authoritarian" style of teaching, for example, might provoke critical thinking just as well as the "permissive" style, especially when the student was exposed to both. "Open-plan" is not the panacea and it is wrong to expect all students to progress in the core-values, at an accelerated rate under such a regimen.
3. In pursuit of the core-values teachers must develop themselves through continuing and recurrent education. Mutual assessment within the institutions and with their constituencies was thought to be a procedure to be refined. This would require teachers, students and parents to meet in groups to assess educational activities.*
4. Since "truth" can be sought in many areas of reality teaching expertise, now expected in physical science, mathematics, humanities and the Arts should be extended to morals, religion and aesthetics. Sensitive as they were to controversial issues the group was nonetheless convinced that questions of morality and understanding of religious and other world views could not be left to chance or denied the service of special skills, knowledge and understanding. Some members were especially concerned that in Australia special attention should be paid to the Christian religion as the "dominant culture". Those who dissented nevertheless agreed that religion generally and other world views had to be included in the search for truth.

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*Work done by Creese and Roff on an Australian version of the American evaluation scheme is available at Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College in Victoria.

5. The core-values call for reinforcement in a school community. The group saw the need for some ritual or repetitive dramatization by which the values would be rehearsed.
6. Motivation of students toward the desired qualities and way of life was a subject of some disagreement and the group was by no means unaware of objections to moving students toward the goals favoured by this group. Yet the group accepted responsibility for the maximal development of each individual. Motivation toward excellence they thought could come from examinations, from contest, from praise, a system of rewards but also from the generation of joy in participation whether in failure or achievement. Throughout, the test of educational practices and procedures would be motivation toward life-long education.
7. How is quality to be evaluated? The application of quantitative measures to practices and procedure must be secondary to qualitative tests. Some possibility was envisaged, nonetheless, of a quantitative test of truth-seeking using pre- and post-tests for the comprehension of scientific criteria but much included under the heading of beneficence (for example) remained and should remain intangible. Qualities such as those of compassion, consideration for others and progress in individual development may be perceived, and the Outward Bound Movement may have shown ways of assessing such qualities, but the general atmosphere of a school can be more readily sensed than measured.
8. Schemes of subjective evaluation such as the "appraisal scheme" available in the Northern Territory and the New England (U.S.A.) scheme recently applied in Canberra Grammar School need further examination.

   Values which are the criteria of quality remain the responsibility of a board of management, the principal, the teachers and the constituency. Some devolution of responsibility from "the system" to individual schools is necessary if this responsibility is to be properly exercised.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The somewhat informal language of some of this report has been retained so that those who are not acquainted with the Search conference technique may read how one group used it in their particular field of education as seen by one of the participants.

Stage 1. Using the Search conference technique we wrote up fourteen headings — areas of interest and importance as suggested by members. We then grouped these into six areas.

1. Aims and Purposes of pre-school education: including structure of program, integration of pre-school and school, pre-school and preparation for school, and a query on importance of buildings (which we did not have time to follow up)

2. Alternatives to pre-school at pre-primary level, age of entry and rights to pre-school education
3. Accountability
4. Multicultural education
5. Integration of pre-primary services
6. Sponsorship of pre-primary programs.

It can be seen that questions of integration with primary reflect interests and concerns and integration of early childhood services after the South Australian solution.

Stage 2. There was a unanimous decision to discuss Aims and Purposes of pre-school education and four groups, working separately, produced their own lists after which further time was spent producing an agreed selection or synthesis from these. This turned out to be our most important list (see end of report). Though not spelt out we show the chance to cater for individual differences and developments and to offer, if necessary, assistance in the form of intervention in education, health or welfare areas.

Stage 3. The next stage was a deeper examination of a very few of these issues — all we had time for. Several members felt strongly about the need for greater emphasis on the cognitive aspect of the program for the pre-primary child. So, on Tuesday, sub-groups were formed to look at language and mathematical development.

The lists they produced—of concepts and skills in these areas—were important and fundamental.

First we have PLAY! Play that is not only natural — given freedom of movement and access to materials — but the chief means of learning, of creating or expressing, of acting out social roles as well as perplexing situations, and experimenting with oneself and people and things in the environment.

Given a list of concepts and skills to be developed in the pre-primary years a teacher (or sometimes another adult or a parent) can learn how to use the immediate content of the child's own play, his activity, purpose, or interest, as a medium through which to develop these concepts and skills.

Language skills included listening, speaking, reporting, imagining and questioning. Joan Tough's three books and course on language development were not only highly commended but were already in use in two states.

In Maths concepts we had spatial, number, measurement and for Skills, problem solving and questioning.

We want to get more structure into the pre-primary program, not just to advance preparation of the three "R's", or to "prepare children for school" in the utilitarian framework of "it will mean that the Infants' teacher can start at a higher level" but because children CAN learn and can enjoy learning these concepts and skills at four and five years of age and are for the most part ready and eager to do so and also because this age of spontaneity and open enquiry about the world can be utilised by providing the experiences and language on which all future learning will be based.

And now about the teacher—the quality of the program ultimately depends on the quality of the teacher, who must have an in-depth knowledge of the relevant philosophies and the freedom to choose the approach which she believes most appropriate, in view of her own abilities and the needs of the children.

And to sum up — the quality of pre-primary education. . . ?

That is defined as "effectively implementing all the aims that we have listed".

Aims of Pre-primary Education

- To assist and supplement the parent and involve the community in the education of the child.
- To provide for the development of the child's affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains.
- To identify and cater for each child's special needs.
- To provide the above in the context of a "caring" environment which develops the child's social awareness.
- To foster language development as a vehicle for all learning.
- To create an effective learning continuum (seamless curriculum).
- To integrate all early childhood services and provide early intervention.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The members of this Sub-conference had the advantage of meeting in primary schools of different age and design in the Australian Capital Territory and of consulting with the teachers in them. In this section the description of the procedures followed by the Sub-conference have been omitted but the valuable report, with some editing for publication, has been printed in full.

Recommendations and Statements

(A) Of Full Sub-conference

(i) *Staff Selection*

(a) *At the School*

(i) the school should have a strong input in the selection of staff;
(ii) job descriptions for each vacancy should be prepared by the school;
(iii) appointments be made as close in relation to job descriptions as possible.

(b) *On Entry into Training*

The selection of college students needs a complete review. (See below.)

(ii) *Work Experience*

The human resource is the most critical in the development of quality education.

Wider experience of life is needed by teachers.

Implications:

1. We endorse Mature Age Entry policies adopted by many colleges.
2. We endorse the option of allowing students to gain work experience before entry into college.
3. We endorse In-service programs that encourage new experiences in the outside world (e.g. Ed. admin. meets with Bus. admin. etc.).
4. We recommend the value of development leave provisions for teachers.
5. We encourage and endorse teachers being involved in community activities.
6. We recommend the value of exchange programs within and between the various parts of the educational sector (state/private/catholic; primary/secondary/teachers colleges/administration; state/territories.

(iii) *Curriculum Development*

(a) There is a need to work towards a clarification of terminology throughout Australia.

(b) Recommended Definition Core Curriculum:

Core of knowledge (including skills) for every school (fleshed out and made appropriate at the school base).

Essential parts; reading, writing and arithmetic.

(c) Learning should be an enjoyable experience.

(d) More emphasis should be placed on mathematics.

(e) Recommendation:

Due to lack of curriculum development expertise among teachers it is unreasonable to ask them to devise a proven and viable sequence of activities for subjects which depend on prerequisite skills for the achievement of Primary Education aims. Therefore in those areas where sequence is a vital concern experts who are experienced, practising, trained teachers in Australia should be invited to meet in order to produce a proven sequence and leave how to teach it to the schools.

(f) Work:

Should become a subject in the curriculum.

(iv) *Status of Primary Education*

In the development of Quality Education in Australia, high priority must be given to primary education.

The status of primary education can be improved by:

(1) Recognition by both the general public and educators of the critical impact of primary education (particularly the first three years) on:

- Attitudes.
- Developmental skills.
- Sense of achievement.
- Positive self-concept.

(2) Development of human resources in primary education:

- Numbers of staff.
- Quality of selection and opportunity for employment.
- Attractiveness of teaching in primary schools.

(v) *Various Definitions of Open Education*

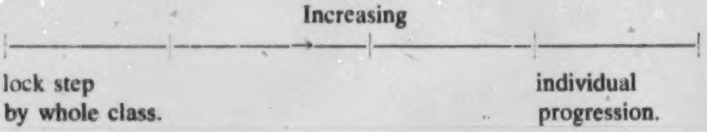
(a) Opening into the Community:

Library, factories, gymnasium, creek, park, etc.

(b) Open Architecture:

Large open spaces — greater freedom to move into different environment—quiet room, wet area, large empty area, courtyard.

(c) Open Class Organisation:



(d) Open Choice of Group Size:

Variety of ways by which teacher organises learning experiences. Teacher selects organisation most suitable to the immediate task. Class, groups, individuals, or up to a school.

(vi) *Quality*

(a) Change from QUANTITY to QUALITY implies change in emphasis from MATERIAL RESOURCES to HUMAN RESOURCES.

(b) The continuing education of the teacher becomes most important (pre-service, in-service, work experience).

(c) Quality is attainable in a plural society through decentralisation. Each school is able to decide on own values.

(d) The quality of a system depends on the separate qualities of the individual schools within the system.

A healthy body needs healthy cells and healthy cells need a healthy body.

(e) Thus each school must spell out its own value system. Each "system" should seek out and support QUALITY—but not necessarily define initially what it sees as quality.

(f) Teacher consultation in environmental design is needed (e.g. flexibility to allow either open or traditional teaching in an area is seen as desirable and consistent with a move to quality.

(g) Emphasis must be on the child.

(B) By Sub-groups that Reported Back to the Sub-conference

(i) *Acceptance of Atypical Children into Regular Classrooms*

There was a general view that the current boundaries should be extended. However some children would continue to be taught in separate institutions/classrooms. Particular efforts should be made to include in the mainstream those with physical disability.

Implications:

- — Increased specialist staff needed in schools.
- — Regular teachers must be sympathetic and patient.
- — School design altered (e.g. ramps for wheelchairs).
- — Increased funding for equipment.

(ii) *Parental Involvement in Schools*

(a) In the Development of the Child:

- — Parents can contribute in all areas of the curriculum provided adequate pre-service preparation of parents is provided (possibly drawn from a school pool).

Implication:

(i) Need pre-service training courses for parents.

(ii) Parents do not have a right to be involved in the classroom. Selection must be in the hands of the Principal/Staff.

Recommendation:

Task force to bring to the community a more balanced understanding of the nature of school-based curriculum development and the place within it of education for literacy and numeracy.

(b) In School Administration:

Parents are interested.

Implications:

- — Schools need to be more open in informing the parent of what is happening.
- — Opportunity needs to be provided for duly elected representatives in long and short term planning.

(iii) *Media-Technology*

Implications:

Increased use of technological aids but that real life experiences continue. Teachers are not replaced by technological aids.

(iv) *In-Service Education*

Quality of teaching is an important issue. This creates a need for:

(a) Identification of people who want to teach and encouraging them to undertake teacher education.

(b) Moral and spiritual education — which will require attitudinal change in teachers.

(c) In-service education that is school based.

(d) In-service education that is the responsibility of a generalist — i.e. a consultant.

(e) An integration of practice and theory in in-service education.

(f) The introduction of nitty gritty in pre-service.

(g) The reintroduction of teacher colleges.

(h) The development of large and small group teaching strategies.

(i) Strong leadership from principal and department officers.

(j) A recognition of the limited value of subject committees in schools.

(k) The development of teacher knowledge and understanding of teaching programs.

Recommendation

(a) Provision for school-based in-service programs with teacher relief to release staff, as is found in Queensland.

(b) In-service activities should be credited to teachers (not full agreement).

(c) College courses should be more relevant to the school situation.

Rate of Change — and its effects on the school/curriculum

(a) Innovation has destroyed continuity in schools to some extent.

(b) Continuity and certainty is also affected by other factors such as Peers, Media, Materialism of Society which has led to a raising of pupil expectations of teachers and critical judgments of them.

(c) Social relationships between men and women have consequences for children and child-rearing practices which flow over into schools and affects teachers.

(d) Programs funded for innovation grants have created some envy and divisiveness without furthering the specific role of the school.

(e) Increased individualism has inhibited the development of a school spirit.

Grading — Evaluation

(1) Parent and child should know what can be done and how well it is done.

(2) Parent and child should know how the child performs in relationship to peers.

Teacher Training

(a) Need for both teacher training and personal development (the educated person).

(b) Selection should look to more than academic qualifications.

(c) Teacher training course needs to focus on teaching as a profession (just as medical course to produce doctors).

(d) Need to acknowledge different preparation for primary secondary teachers.

(e) University degrees in education should differentiate between the preparation of primary or secondary teachers, and should include extensive practical teaching in schools to see theory in practice.

General

There is a need for long range Government planning.

There is a need for continuity of Educational Philosophy within the one school for at least 3-5 years.

The future design of schools should be conducted with the full involvement of practising teachers.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The first part of the report of the Sub-conference on Secondary Education described the search procedure used. What follows takes up the report at the point where it was determined to concentrate on certain issues.

Having moved thus far in its task, the group then proceeded to identify specific challenges facing schools, particularly secondary schools, in the coming years. It was possible to identify about ten such challenges and, in the final working session, members were asked to allocate themselves to one of these topics. After some re-grouping, there were finally six groups working in the following areas:

1. Education for work, unemployment and leisure.
2. Schools as adaptive and responsive institutions.
3. School-Community interdependencies.
4. Secondary school as transitional and peripheral for students.
5. Education for global co-existence.
6. School as a caring community.

The reports of these six groups form the main part of the report from this sub-conference. Clearly the topics selected for discussion at this stage represent only a sample of the important issues that were raised during the search. We turn now to consider each of these six topics briefly in turn.

1. *Education for Work, Unemployment and Leisure*

In the light of the foreseeable future society and of its implications for schools, this sub-conference believes the following skills and characteristics are essential in school leavers. Some of these factors are specifically desirable in relation to employment, some to leisure however derived, and some to both.

(a) In relation to both work and leisure:

1. Self-confidence and reliance, self-motivation and initiative.
2. Capacity to work in isolation or in a team.

3. Capacity to choose present actions and future directions on the basis of available and obtainable information and upon the background of a value system.
4. Ability to see and/or produce order in apparent chaos.
5. An understanding of what is involved in "employment" and "leisure" and of the options available.

(b) In relation specifically to work:

1. Pre-disposition to re-training, implying maintenance in the child throughout his/her schooling of the love of learning prevalent in infancy.
2. Literacy and numeracy in relation to foreseeable requirements.

(c) In relation specifically to leisure:

1. Knowledge of access means to such facilities after leaving school, implying some continued contact of school leavers with their former schools.

2. *Schools as Adaptive and Responsive Institutions*

(a) The school must be seen by parents, students, staff and society as a concerned community and this implies that certain general attitudes must be held by all teachers, such as open-mindedness and a willingness to listen and consult.

(b) Teachers must not only demonstrate open-mindedness and a willingness to listen and consult but must also be aware of significant changes that affect students, and this implies that techniques such as the exchange of ideas, observation and surveys of pupils and continued non-threatening evaluation of their own policies and procedures are needed. A further implication of this is that teachers must see the need for their own continuing education via in-service training and in other ways.

(c) For administrators, the above point has the implication that there will be an increasing need for provision of such in-service and other re-training and the provision of such numbers of staff in schools as will enable both this and the preparation, discussion and use of relevant curricular materials which are sensitive to changes in the needs of the community.

3. *School-Community Interdependence*

(a) Development should continue in producing co-operation within the communities such as the sharing of facilities, curriculum development, government of schools and the use of resources, including human resources, outside the school.

(b) Action should be taken to overcome the problem defined as the "hesitant" parent. That is, the parent who refuses or is reluctant to become involved in the life of the school at a variety of levels.

(c) On the other hand, teachers should be assisted to recognize that parental involvement in schools is not necessarily a threat to their authority and independence.

NOTE: This group felt that before real involvement of the community in the school would occur, there would need to be a fundamental change in the attitude of the Australian society.

4. *Secondary Schools as Transitional and Peripheral for Students*

The underlying assumptions here are that education is lifelong, that schooling forms only a part of the process and that the family, however constituted, is the first and principal educator. Also, secondary education is seen by parents and society to be a transition from primary education to work or to tertiary education. The implications of this are:

(a) Educators should beware lest they assume that the schooling process is the sole agency in the education of the child.

(b) Although secondary schools in Australia have historically been regarded as a means of preparation for tertiary education, we have since 1945 followed the aim of education for all. Despite this, the curriculum is still essentially designed for would-be matriculants.

(c) Factors which make secondary education less palatable for students include the existence of satisfactory experiences outside school, peer group pressures, financial status, and the pupil's need for independence. In addition, there exist problems of alienation and the existence of unreal aspirations by pupils or their parents as a result of social pressures. The options this group sees as open to counter these forces include:

1. The existence of school-based curricula with contributions from students, parents and the community, bearing in mind that the definition of final objectives is a task for the professional teacher and that excellence is a goal worth seeking.
2. In cases where it is needed, specific remediation in academic or psychological development should be provided.

5. *Education for Global Co-existence*

(a) Basic values and attitudes must permeate the entire schooling process from the kindergarten on. Such values would include:

1. Equality of the individual's rights, regardless of culture, race or creed.
2. Respect for all persons as persons with equal opportunities to improve themselves.
3. Recognition that all people have equal rights to be free from want.

(b) Teacher-training programs should be such as to bring teachers to recognize the importance of these values and characteristics.

(c) Programs should be available through schools and other educating groups to assist growing acceptance of these values and attitudes in adult members of the community.

6. *The School as a Caring Community*

(a) Schools exist for children, each one of whom is an exceptional child. The implications of this are:

1. That there must be "caring groups" in the school of a size that allows each child to have an effective relationship with an adult.
2. That there must be provision for catering to his individual learning needs within the school group, whether he be very bright or very weak.

(b) The staff of a school is a team which is supported by psychologists, doctors and para-medical workers, welfare officers and by teacher re-educators. This team should be relatively stable and this implies a need for a career structure to ensure this and to ensure that teachers do not have to swap the classroom for an administrative desk to gain promotion.

(c) The family is the basic unit of the society and the school cannot assume this role. Nevertheless, in the face of family breakdown, the school does have a supporting function.

In summary, an article of high quality is one which not only has all those necessary characteristics which will enable it to perform its function fully but which is also "finished" well. That is, it has taken account of the possibility of rough edges. It is to the first of these characteristics that this sub-conference gave its attention: attempting to predict the requirements for which the educational cloth must be cut in the future. As we move into that future and we modify and re-modify our pattern in the light of experience, we shall be bringing into reality in this country our "Saville Row" suit — quality in Australian education.

POST-COMPULSORY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Sub-conference on this topic recommended that the College urge governments to use every means to reduce unemployment in the 15-24 year age group. It is also strongly recommended that educational institutions be used now to meet the leisure needs of young people.

The report stated that the members of the Sub-conference, as practitioners in the post-compulsory sphere were concerned in trying to assess what post-compulsory education should be for, and who it should be for and what the priorities should be. "We hardly got to the problem of quality. But it is of little use analysing the quality of our product if the consumers are showing disinterest in even buying the product."

The Key Issues

The attempt was made, since this was a participative conference, to identify the issues which participants considered were important. This was done through correspondence before the conference, and in the first session of the search conference.

The following clusters of questions emerged:

1. *The Clientele*
   - (a) How can those who have never tackled post-compulsory education (or been away from it for years) be adequately prepared for re-entry into education? How can psychological barriers preventing individuals from returning to education be broken down?
   - (b) How can those who lack knowledge about educational provision (such as retired people) be informed?
   - (c) How can the needs of the following groups or interests be accurately determined:
     - — industry and business
     - — the public sector
     - — individuals
     - — deprived individuals
     - — part-time students?
   - (d) Can educational institutions become generators and anticipators of needs?

2. *Structure and Function of the Post-Compulsory and Lifelong Learning Provision*
   - (a) How can rationalization take place in this area without one's own institution being swallowed up?

     Co-ordination and liaison between bodies in this sphere has been neglected, but should be stimulated vigorously — to permit, for instance, flow of students from one institution to another.
   - (b) What *ought* the emphasis be in post-compulsory education:
     - — on academic or vocational learning
     - — on credentialled or personal development learning?
   - (c) How can post-compulsory educational institutions become more accessible? By moulding them into more open learning environments, reflecting the environment in which they are embedded? And how can any such accessibility and flexibility be financed?
   - (d) How are physical and human resources to be found and marshalled? How are they to be allocated? To what extent do quality or quantity factors intrude?

3. *Community/Education Interface*
   - (a) How can the barriers between the professional educators and the community be dismantled?
   - (b) How can the human and physical resources of educational institutions and their surrounding communities be more integrated — through concepts and schemes such as:
     - — Community Resource Planning?
     - — Outreach?
     - — The City as a School?

(c) How adequately does the apprenticeship system bridge the school/work interface?

4. *Adjustment to the Future*
   (a) How can education help individuals become more adaptive to a changing society?
   (b) How can educational institutions themselves learn to adjust to rapid economic and social change? What are the alternative scenarios to the year 2000?
   (c) What is the emerging nature of the changing relationship between education, work and leisure?

5. *Specialist Problems*

   Should there be teacher training for post-compulsory educators? Should more library facilities and critical reading skills be developed?

6. *Quality*
   (a) How can the quality of courses be developed and maintained?
   (b) What is the relevance of provision for adults and how do we assess the quality and relevance of that provision?

The Social Developments Impacting upon Education

A futures perspectives session was held in which participants collectively created a picture of the emerging trends likely to have continuing importance over the next 10-15 years. As a second step, the group separated into three parts and identified the most significant of these for education. The following then were identified as significant social developments that would impact upon the educational sphere, especially the post-compulsory area.

(a) Demographic changes such as the ageing of the population.

(b) Changes in the work world, including automation, male/female participation ratios in the workforce, increased flexibility in working patterns.

(c) The growing diversity of value systems and lifestyles including increased acceptance of unemployment, changing sex roles, greater male participation in the home, increased leisure time, and search for personal identity.

(d) Increased tensions between local autonomy and centralised control, accompanied by increased tensions upon the individual, resulting in increased incapacity to cope.

(e) Impact of technology (computers, new fuel technologies) on individual lifestyles, human frontiers (space travel).

(f) Growing uncertainty of the future, and the increased difficulty of planning.

(g) Increased economic stringency which will require more resourcefulness, efficiency.

(h) Changing emphases in education:
- education for earning a living or learning to live
- values issues
- questioning of authority
- media's impact upon education, especially literacy and knowledge.

Suggested Definitions of Terms in the Post-Compulsory Sphere

Some individuals had called early in the conference for a clarification of terms in the post-compulsory sphere, largely because different educational authorities used terms in different senses.

As a starting point we examined some suggested definitions of terms.

The references used were: *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning*, OECD/CERI (1973), and C. Duke, *Lifelong Education: An Australian Prognosis* (1976).

Adult Education:

"Adult education refers to any learning activity or program deliberately designed by a providing agent to satisfy any learning need or interest that may be experienced at any stage in his or her life by a person who is over the statutory school leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in education. Its ambit, thus, spans non-vocational, vocational, general, formal and non-formal studies as well as education with a collective social purpose." (OECD)

Continuing Education:

A generic term for all kinds of short-course non-credit education. "Continuing education may be technical (or vocational) or non-vocational (or liberal or general). It may employ correspondence or other teaching-at-a-distance methods. It can be in-service, part-time, sandwich or concurrent, or full-time for a more or less short period of time." (Duke 1976 : 13)

Education:

" 'Education' has normally been taken to imply deliberate teaching purposes, strategies and resources, usually including professional preparation, standards and membership for teachers and, less automatically of late, the presence at the time of the learning of a live teacher. ('Of late' because of the increasing emphasis on teaching at a distance, programmed instruction, etc.)" (Duke 1976 : 6)

Extension Studies:

See extra-mural studies.

External Studies:

"External studies are by definition also extra-mural, but refer to a mode of preparation to obtain a degree from those universities which permit and facilitate this road to accreditation." (Duke 1976 : 15)

Extra-Mural Studies:

Refers "to provision by an agency, usually educational but also e.g. a department of agriculture, outside its main-stream responsibilities (extending to the wider community — of citizens, graduates or farmers — and taking education beyond the 'walls' or off the campus)." (Duke 1976 : 15)

Formal Education:

Refers "to the conventional main-stream of educational provision through such institutions as nursery and pre-schools, primary, secondary, technical and trade schools, community, advanced, teacher and other colleges and universities, for qualifications particularly at the levels beyond the age when education, that is to say for most practical purposes schooling, is obligatory." (Duke 1976 : 16)

Further Education:

Refers to all post-school education (other than the work of universities and CAEs) "both for credit (normally hitherto called technical education) and not for credit (loosely called adult education and here continuing education)." (Duke 1976 : 14)

Informal Education:

May be equated with "anything which is admissible as education which does not attract credit for qualification." (Duke 1976 : 16)

Learning:

The term "learning" is usually employed with a wider meaning than "training", "schooling" and "education".

"Learning is an essential characteristic of the living organism, necessary for its survival and for its evolution. Man learns in all his life situations. In the more specific sense of gathering knowledge and applying it, human learning takes place not only in school, but also at home and in the work environment . . ." (OECD/CERI 1973 : 17)

L'education Permanente (or lifelong education or permanent education):

L'education permanente "amounts to an assertion that education is, and should be seen to be, a lifelong process; that it is not a phenomenon exclusively with formal and traditional institutions such as schools and universities; that the education of an individual needs to be planned with regard to what has gone before and what may be expected to follow (vertical integration); and that it must be planned also with regard to all the roles that, at a given point in his life, the individual sustains and all the educative influences to which he is subjected (horizontal integration)." (Jessup 1973) Unesco has adopted "lifelong education" as the English equivalent of l'education permanente; a widely used alternative term is "permanent education" which has also been defined as a "concept designed to enable mankind to develop to the fullest, in a process that continues throughout life. The concept of permanent education, as the organising principle of all education, implies a comprehensive, coherent and integrated system designed to meet the educational and cultural aspirations of every person in accordance with his abilities." (Council of Europe, 1976)

Lifelong Education:

See l'education permanente.

Permanent Education:

See l'education permanente.

Post-Compulsory Age Education:

Any "education following the completion of secondary education (whether one leaves after four, five or more years of secondary schooling) and so may be sub-tertiary in level. It might also lie outside the area of formal education . . ." (Duke 1976 : 14)

Professional Education:

See technical education.

Recurrent Education:

"Recurrent education is a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-compulsory or post-basic education, the essential characteristic of which is the distribution of education over the total life-span of the individual in a recurring way, i.e. in alternation with other activities, principally with work, but also with leisure and retirement . . . It is one comprehensive alternative strategy for what at present are three unrelated sectors:

(a) the conventional post-compulsory educational system that includes the last years of secondary education and the post-secondary system;

(b) on-the-job training of all kinds and at all levels, most of which is organised by the private sector; and

(c) adult education in the more limited sense of the vast and manifold array of educational provisions for adults . . ." (OECD/CERI 1973, pp. 24-25)

Schooling:

"Schooling" is a term "helpful for the connotation distinguishing school experience from education. This identifies the central process of the school as somewhat akin to training, rather than matching the much wider terms 'education' and 'learning'. (That is not to say that many kinds of learning, planned and unplanned, do not occur in schools, nor that all schools are alike)." (Duke 1976 : 5) "Schooling" "is most usefully confined to formal education activity within educational institutions (pre-school to tertiary) . . ." (Duke 1976 : 9)

Technical Education:

Technical/vocational/professional education "means education as preparation for a particular job; it is usually, but not necessarily, for credit." (Duke 1976 : p. 4)

Training:

"Institutionally speaking, 'training', other than of animals, commonly refers to young children (nursery, pre-school) and to the provision of specific skills, usually to adults for a specific job. Hence industrial and public service training, and the Australian Institute of Training and Development." (Duke 1976 : 5)

Vocational Education:

See technical education.

Note: While these definitions were useful, certain definitions particularly vocational and technical education caused problems. There was emerging consensus that the college ought to address itself to these definitional tasks to promote more effective dialogue on issues within the post-compulsory sphere.

Priorities in Post-Compulsory Education

The next step in the workshop was to examine the following questions:

(a) What is post-compulsory, lifelong education for?

(b) Who is it for?

(c) What are the priorities?

Two groups addressed themselves to this task, although one group slithered in the swamp of discussion rather than establishing priorities.

The other group identified seven categories of those who would benefit from post-compulsory education — viz.

(1) Older and retired — i.e. individuals still wanting educational stimulation.

(2) In the workforce the post-compulsory sector can assist:
  - those wishing to upgrade training
  - those wanting to prove to themselves that they can manage the work world
  - parents who wish to help with children's homework
  - retraining for new jobs
  - cultural re-orientation, e.g. aboriginals, migrants, including language and avoidance of culture shock
  - older people seeking new entry to workforce and without basic skills (incl. women)
  - fathers without wives — social support
  - handicapped
  - administration retraining and upgrading.

(3) Educationally disadvantaged groups that would benefit from further learning:
  - migrants
  - aboriginals

- unemployed
- illiterate
- physically handicapped
- dropouts
- poor
- disadvantaged homes (of various kinds)
- 15+ pupils marking time in schools
- mentally handicapped.

(4) Those with increased "Leisure":
  - partly unemployed by technological change
  - those who retire early
  - those who take advantage of flexitime
  - housewives.

(5) Adults seeking higher qualifications and requiring tertiary entry.

(6) Educational rejects from the secondary and tertiary spheres.

(7) Secondary and tertiary achievers who still wish to have student experience.

Innovations in Post-Compulsory Institutions

One session was devoted to input of innovations in the post-compulsory sector.

1. *Link in the A.C.T.*

In the A.C.T. there are some ninety post-compulsory institutions offering courses. At two search conferences in 1976 and 1977, involving both consumers and providers of further education, it became clear that many people in the community were ignorant of the total range of courses available within the territory, and a clear need was expressed for a document which outlined the basic details of the provision in the Further Education area. The Centre for Continuing Education, in cooperation with the Department of Education appointed Ms. Ros Delaney to create a Master document giving the required details. This substantial document is now placed in twenty-four centres throughout the A.C.T. The emphasis is on non-formal courses although formal courses are also listed.

LINK is aimed at improving community access to learning provision and comprehensive information on adult post-secondary learning opportunities is provided in the LINK Master Directory, information sheets and newsletters, and it is available through a large number of community and neighbourhood outlets.

2. *Linked Courses*

The purpose of linked courses is to assist students in making their career choice and secondly allowing secondary students to have some experience with further education in other institutions thus enabling them to have study at one or more institutions. The possibility of providing linked courses means, of course, cooperation between secondary and post-secondary institutions and they represent one of the ways in which the two sectors of education can cooperate more actively and fruitfully than has been the case in the past.

Linked courses have been available in South Australia for the past five years, and currently involve fifteen hundred students. Attempts are being made nationally by the Federal Department of Education to create interest and action with linked courses.

3. *At Charleton*

In North Central Victoria, at Charleton north west of Bendigo, a scheme is being operated by the Bendigo Technical College, catering to an area that is deprived of TAFE facilities. There are High Schools but no secondary technical facilities. Students within a thirty-five mile radius of Charleton in grades ten and eleven have the opportunity of experiencing an extended curriculum. For one day a week students are brought in to have experience with areas such as automotive practices, shorthand, typing, wool-classing and so on. Not only that, but apprentices also have the opportunity to receive further training. In the evenings, the facility is opened for adults, and some one hundred and twenty adults take advantage of this opportunity as well as a few adult students who attend during the day.

4. *Box Hill Technical College*

Box Hill Technical College serves a population of 570,000 people, and it is endeavouring to meet its TAFE charter. There have been a barrage of requests, particularly in the handicapped and special education area, for which there has been little provision—despite the growing number of paraplegics and quadriplegics. Because there is so little provision, the morale problems for these individuals are shattering. The cost of training and sustaining morale for these individuals is heavy indeed. The College is considering ways of making provision through mass media for the deaf and the handicapped.

5. *The A.C.T. Secondary Colleges*

Colleges in the A.C.T. cater for years eleven and twelve, and in general they are open and cooperative institutions with their own Boards, having representatives of teachers, students, staff as well as an A.C.T. Schools Authority representative. The students take only tertiary entry courses — which may help to account for the fact that the students are being overworked. There are signs of closer relationships between staff and students, between the school and the community and signs of a general move toward such colleges becoming community colleges. Attempts are being forged to provide experimental courses catering to people in the schools who will be potentially unemployed.

6. *The Hard-Core Unemployed*

In Victoria, at Richmond, an unemployed club had been established, catering to some forty to sixty teenagers, many of whom go there virtually every night. There is a tendency even for members of the group who get jobs, to remain with the group. An attempt was made to establish a course for the hard-core unemployed, after conversations between the Commonwealth Employment Service Director, and the Richmond Technical College. People with bad school and work records constituted this group. The essential aim was to help recalcitrant youth establish a sense of worth and esteem by developing occupational skills and competence, leading hopefully to employment in a range of occupations. Several features need noting; first, that there was group interactive work; concentration on the numeracy/literacy area; individual streams of learning was the norm; the work ethic was to some degree restored through the simulation of factory institution conditions and so on. By the end of the course, ten of the students had reached Form Five English and nine had attained Form Four Mathematics. So successful was the course that another twelve students are undertaking the same course this year.

Note: It should be mentioned that none of the participants who came to this conference expected to be providing input of a formal nature. Thus these contributions were spontaneous rather than planned. It demonstrates that inputs can be given authoritatively at a conference without the traditional rigidities that characterise many conferences.

Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning

An underlying and recurrent theme of this sub-conference which came explicitly to the surface during the Wednesday afternoon session was the reciprocal effects of social, technological and other kinds of change on education. Most participants contributed to the discussion of this theme by referring to the specific educational contexts and programs with which they were personally concerned.

But programs were discussed predominantly in terms of the needs of individuals to make sensible decisions about employment and the general tendency of employers to insist on various kinds of certification as a condition of entry into occupations. In other words many participants viewed education as being responsive to the demands of the industry and society generally — an essentially reactive concept of the role of education in society. Participants were perhaps uneasy in publicly expressing the view that education should take positive steps in redefining and repackaging educational provisions in order to achieve personal autonomy for individuals.

The obvious tension between passive and active concepts of the role of education evident during the sub-conference lead to lively discussion of the part educators can and should play in:

(i) raising students' consciousness of the political and social reality of work in Australian society;

(ii) the relative inability of further education as a means of securing employment, let alone as a means of upward occupational and social mobility;

(iii) the increasing inappropriateness of the "work ethic" as the main axis of our educational orientation and aspirations, and as a motivation for bringing or coercing students to achieve at school;

(iv) the need therefore, to consider the importance of shifting the emphasis away from "work" and towards first the ethics of "learning for its own sake" as an alternative to gainful employment, and second "education for leisure". That is, some consideration should be given to ways in which the three ethics of work, learning for its own sake, and leisure, can form the basis of educational provision and practice in Australian educational institutions.

In the past, we have perhaps misused the term "work" in referring to a narrowly defined range of activities relating just to paid occupations. Leisure and learning also constitute legitimate forms of work (or gainful employment) and should therefore be accorded comparable significance, status, prestige (and therefore funding) in courses and programs in the overall lifelong education provision.

(v) Some attention was paid to the question of education (i.e. knowledge) as a source of power and control, especially in increasing the level of participation of *all* individuals in decision-making in an industrial democracy such as Australia.

In this light, education's attempt to respond to "individual needs" and "society's needs" was seen as being either inadequate or maladaptive, for the consequence was that merely responding would in essence be maintaining and reinforcing the status quo and the accompanying inequalities. Obviously educators should do more than simply respond, for example, to the demands of industry for more and different kinds of skilled manpower.

Hence a recommendation was debated that "The A.C.E. should take steps to remove those elements in lifelong education programs that nurture and reinforce 'victim or submissive' mentalities in individuals." In other words, lifelong educators should aim to develop those capacities in individuals that will enhance the possibility of their being "masters of their own destiny", and increase the opportunities for contributing positively to the affairs of Australian society.

Increasing recognition occurred through this session, that society and educational practice were shifting, and that the latter was sluggish indeed. Some of the issues touched on in this session need reporting:

(i) that schools often produce a "victim mentality" — i.e. students have had such unpleasant experiences of school as "failures" that they never wish to enter institutions of learning again;

(ii) that as the numbers of paid full-time jobs decline, one of the most adaptive ways to meet this challenge, is to share out the work more equally through permanent part-time work, shared jobs, earlier retirement, etc.;

(iii) that the young leaving school appeared to be the age group least convinced of the work ethic. Depriving them of any chance, or at best, few chances of getting jobs would create two trends — some will never want to work, and secondly those who want jobs and are deprived of access to jobs, will go through a debilitating series of stages which would include loss of self-esteem, helplessness, anger — even striking out viciously at the society that has not delivered its promises.

Postscript

After the Conference copies of the report were sent to the members of the sub-conference. The following passages have been selected from the replies received as additional comments to the report.

I am also thinking very carefully about the concern expressed by the sub-conference regarding having school leavers given the opportunity to learn how to cope with life. I am of the opinion that this will require much further discussion, in order to try and identify, what it will be that the school leavers will have to cope with on the whole pattern of life. Unless that identification is made any education work in this field will be a hit or miss affair. I feel that this is a very important point and I want to stress that I am concerned about it.

I was not satisfied that the sub-conference succeeded in answering the point raised in the question "who are the priorities?". In any program of post-compulsory education and/or learning, funding will be very important. If there is a reduced workforce, for any reason whatsoever, post-compulsory education could well be one of the prime targets for fund withdrawal due to less money coming in from taxation, and less money being available from the participators. I would have liked to have seen if the participants of the sub-conference favoured a de-schooling situation in order to transfer available funds to the post-compulsory period when the participants know what they want to study and why they want to study. It seems to me that all compulsory education situations deal with captive clients, many of whom reject the learning situation and to that extent waste a certain amount of money, time and energy.

The message of the session on the short talks by the "experts" for me is that where you have persons interested, committed and skilled in dealing with any one area (prison inmates, "hard-core" unemployed, public relations applied to adult education courses) there you have a good chance of achieving positive advances. Often people starting to work in a given area, if they think they have some commitment, would benefit immensely from learning from those with some experience and achievement in the field. Clearly, not always, not even perhaps in most areas, would long formal courses ending in specialist qualifications be necessary. Often short courses, seminars, or periods or secondment would be sufficient. However, the demand for specially trained and qualified specialists outside the actual teaching situation will also increase as the use of computers and of the various kinds of media develops. The provision of learning resources for adults requiring external study facilities, for the illiterate, or the retarded reader in the normal years of regular schooling, and for the provision of all types of media, is essentially a library problem, again requiring trained persons who can provide efficiently the services required. At the present stage of educational development we clearly have many resources in buildings and equipment which are not used to their optimum because of the lack of persons who can demonstrate their effective use. Most of us know of equipment which does nothing but gather dust, or is unserviceable because of lack of maintenance. Again, of course, it should be a matter of concern that any facility sited in any institution should be fully used, if required, by making it available on reasonable terms to persons outside the host institution.

Coordination and liaison appeared to me to be of present importance; it is necessary for those working in any given area to be at least aware of the activities and projects of other individuals and other institutions interested in the area. For instance, it was obvious that the area of "adult education" is not only the concern of agencies specific to the area — for instance, secondary schools are now accepting adult students in day classes, whereas hitherto the provision for adults to obtain secondary school "leaving certificates", matriculation qualifications, and such-like has been in evening classes at technical colleges. It is clear that corollaries of this development will be arrangements to facilitate the flow of students from one institution to another, and a more general disposition to grant credits for courses completed in one institution towards the satisfaction for requirements for final awards (degrees, diplomas, certificates) in another institution.

(i) We need a technology of study which is universally available, and is applied outside learning institutions. It needs to be used in the home, on a job, anywhere there is learning taking place. Such a technology would include:

  (a) dictionary skills;
  (b) communication skills;
  (c) learning gradient skills;
  (d) thus to make the topic real, and not merely an abstract entity.

(ii) This study technology is *the* basic tool to handling the future.

(iii) To the degree one can handle one's (future) environment, then one has Quality. As Pirsig writes in *Zen and Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (Bantam, 1975), "Quality is the continuing stimulus which our environment puts us to create the world in which we live . . . Quality is the source and substance of everything." (p. 245.)

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